THE CORRESPONDENCE OF TWO LOVERS, INHABITANTS OF LYONS.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Mortem orant; tædet cæli convexa tueri.

VIRG.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

DEDICATION.

TO THE HONOURABLE

LADY ANNE LINDSAY.

MADAM,

THE great and fair have ever been looked up to for protection by writers, or inſpired the theme with their own heroiſm and delicacy of ſentiment. Truth renders an affecting ſtory ou bly intereſting; and the preſent appears with that additional recommendation. The loves of Tereſa and Faldoni are recent in the memory of the inhabitants of Lyons, and their letters are probably written with a degree

degree of tenderneſs and pathos not inferior to the Epiſtles of the celebrated Eloiſa and Abelard, while their cataſtrophe diſplays an inſtance of more earneſt and unconquerable attachment. Under the patronage of a Lady univerſally honoured for her diſtinguiſhing taſte and refinement, that the following pages will be more immediately and more reſpectfully noticed by the Public, is with a pleaſing confidence preſumed by,

MADAM,

Your moſt obliged

Devoted ſervant,

THE EDITOR.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF TWO LOVERS.

LETTER I.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

WHAT a ſeparation! what a diſagreeable journey! Shut up in a chaiſe, running poſt, and wherefore? To remove far from the friend I love. The days never appeared ſo tedious to me: ſurely the hours are everlaſting! I ſeem to be travelling to the world's end. I view the rolling wheels, and in mental ſoliloquy ſay, Is all this agitation to diſtreſs me? Were I alone, I ſhould enjoy the ſweet ſolace

of my tears; loſt to every object around me, I ſhould enter Lyons with the full impreſſion of thy image, as if I had juſt left thee. But reſignation is our duty: I am going to ſee an invaluable mother; I will, therefore, ſtudy to be contented, and if I can but forget—Not a word more! If I have the diſcretion to avoid that ſubject, every thing will be right. Heavens! what a languor invades my ſenſes! I can ſcarce write a few words connectedly. Charming couſin! Are you really leſs dear to me? No; but indeed my heart is ſick! The weather is diſmal, the ſnow clogs our way, and I am pierced with cold. However, we have gained the ſhelter of an inn at laſt, and as ſoon as I reach the fire-ſide, I ſnatch up a pen, but doubt whether you can read my ſcrawl; for neither ink, paper, pen, hand, head, nor heart is fit for any thing. My father ſlept all

the way; Madame Deſchamps held a book in her hand; and I was abſorbed in meditation. The houſe of my dear aunt ever preſented itſelf before me; I bade adieu to my apartment, to the garden, to our favourite tree.—They are no more to me. In reality I do not regret Paris, but our converſations, our amuſements, our walks, the pleaſure of being together, the delight of mutual confidence, the ineſtimable charm of congenial ideas. No! were I to go round the world, I could never replace them. What means this exceſſive regret, and theſe unabating tears? I have been abſent from my couſin before, but never experienced this wretched ſolitude, which renders nature around me a dreary wilderneſs: I feel an univerſal deſertion!—I dare not finiſh the ſentence; I dread to name him who is the cauſe of all this diſorder; reaſon itſelf forſakes me; I would baniſh

the idea of him, but cannot eſcape from it. Ah! what emotions have his features raiſed in my boſom! How have the accents of his voice pervaded my very ſoul! I ſtill ſee him; I ſtill hear him! This ſympathetic ſenſibility is the inſpiration of Heaven; no language can deſcribe it. While I am fleeing from him, he is ſtill nearer than ever. My paſſions are in a tempeſt, and my heart is the turbid ocean. Write to me ſpeedily, for I need all your conſolation. In three days we ſhall be at Lyons. This journey does but fret me; ſince I muſt remove from you, would it were to a greater diſtance!

P. S. I will take care of your linnet: recollect how he was careſſed when you told any one that he was intended for me. If I am mentioned, make my—What? My compliments? But, to what purpoſe? Have I not

bid

bid him adieu? The matter is concluded. How can we ever come near each other again? May he be happy! My heart, while it continues to beat, muſt pray for his proſperity.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME

HOW amiable are your attentions! To ſalute me with a letter on my firſt arrival! This is almoſt anticipating my wiſhes. It contains nothing but endearments, and yet it expreſſes an uncommon degree of pity for me, as if it announced ill news. Some paſſages are too affecting. He was, then, diſtreſſed at my departure! You ſay his eyes ſtreamed with tears. — Miſchievous creature! You tell me this, and then, as though nothing had been told, expect to ſee me tranquil; you urge me to conquer an unfortunate paſſion; and reaſon on the ſubject with a provoking indifference. Yes, charming couſin, I have reflected on every particular as you have ſtated it. A foreigner! A ſtranger!

ſtranger! Perhaps deſtitute of fortune and family. Shall the Count de St. Cyran, the proudeſt of mankind, adopt him for a ſon-in-law? That would be a miracle indeed; to accompliſh which, requires no common train of circumſtances. Beſides, am I the object of his thoughts? Will he ever ſee me again? Theſe are ſtrong arguments againſt giving the reins to ſuch a frenzy. But what would you have me do? My heart is ſmitten; and mirth, amuſement, and ſerenity are no more. Sometimes I am for whole days capriciouſly ſilent; I diſlike people with a chearful countenance; they put me out of temper. I care not for diverſions, and make an ungracious return for attempts to pleaſe me. I find no ſatisfaction but by retiring within myſelf. Then I behold you again; I run over all our old ſcenes. This evening as I looked up at the moon, I conſidered

that you might ſurvey it at the ſame inſtant; and I was tranſported with the idea of this aſſociation. I have frequently aſcended the ſtair-caſe of the houſe to go to your apartment, and diſcovered my miſtake with inexpreſſible anguiſh. I am no where at home, but ſeem to be got into a new world. Dear reſidence of my forefathers! Delightful ſcenes of my childhood! Why have I forſaken you? This is frequently my ſoliloquy.—Conſtantia, I muſt make one confeſſion to you, as it will greatly relieve my mind. I dare not flatter myſelf with the hope that he will continue to think of me; every circumſtance tends to chaſe me from his remembrance. The impoſſibility of our ever being united, or even ſeeing each other again, muſt baniſh the image of your unhappy friend from the object of her love. But, could I ſee him, were he in my com-

company, my charming confidant, I ſhould die with joy. Do you comprehend this language?—Thus I have ventured my ſecret, yet bluſh for having imparted it even to you. I cannot bear to read this letter now it is written; and certainly would burn it, but for the teſtimony which it contains, of that unbounded confidence I place in the friendſhip of my Conſtantia.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

I AM juſt come from the play-houſe; and though the whole town was there, I ſeemed to be alone. The piece acted, was, The Village Conjurer. You muſt recollect a certain walk in the Park of Marly, where we ſung the airs in it. Heavens! who was then in company? but, alas! what an alteration! This idea was ſo impreſſed on my mind during the performance, that I could not forbear weeping. My mother aſked me if I was mad? You know that when one would ſuppreſs tears, they guſh the faſter. This was preciſely my caſe. An immoderate fit ſucceeded, and I was obliged to leave the houſe. Indeed what had I to do there, who was diſguſted with every

every thing, whoſe wiſhes centered in retirement? Sometimes I would renounce all connection with nature, but too many ties reſtrain me. An adored mother, a friend of ten thouſand, a friend who cannot be parallelled; and that other, alas! that tyrant—how ſhall I name him? I ſuſtain a million of anxieties on his account. Amid the whirlwind of jarring paſſions, I muſe when I am ſpoken to, I anſwer when nobody ſpeaks to me. My brain is an ocean of troubled thoughts, on which my ſoul is toſt without repoſe. Some unlucky remembrance ſtrikes my imagination, my heart ſhrinks, my underſtanding is bewildered, and my boſom heaves with the deepeſt ſighs. Why am not I miſtreſs of a ſmall portion of neceſſary diſſimulation? I tremble for fear of a diſcovery.—Your work-bag is almoſt finiſhed; the ornaments of it are truly after

nature. I have ſprinkled a few roſes, many thorns, and ſome of thoſe flowers which they call hearts-eaſe—A mighty pretty picture! I aſſure you. You muſt come for it yourſelf; I keep it for none but you, and you ſhall receive it only here. I have alſo drawn a portrait in crayons, the reſemblance ſtriking, though the original is far enough from me. You ſmile, and exclaim, Is it poſſible to copy by memory a figure not ſeen a dozen times! Yet, my dear friend, it is not that figure, but your own, that I have painted; and I wonder that I never thought of the attempt during the delightful year that I paſſed at your houſe. Indeed I have done much in a ſhort time; but, as I do not ſleep, every day is longer by half to me than the generality of mankind. I own, between ourſelves, that I have likewiſe endeavoured to portray the features of

ſome-

ſomebody whom it is ſuperfluous to name. But this muſt be deemed madneſs, when it is known, that I never examined them in nature's paragon; indeed I hardly ever dared to look at them. Yet, ſome God has guided my hand; I view my own performance with aſtoniſhment, as it already diſplays a likeneſs. Ah! dear Conſtantia, woe to your Tereſa, could one man read theſe lines; and if I intruſted him with half this degree of humiliating confidence!

LET-

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

HOW ſhall I begin my letter? Where ſhall I find words to expreſs the crouding ſentiments that ſeduce me? Ah! my friend, I have ſeen him; it is he himſelf, and not a viſion; nay, I view him ſtill. Did you but know! — But, what a relation am I entering on! I muſt diſpatch. While I am alone, I ſnatch up my pen, which rapidly follows the career of my ideas. Attend, and learn the imprudence of your friend. I was at Maſs, my eyes indeed fixed on my book, but my mind engaged by that bewitching phantom which never leaves me. Suddenly Deſchamps, who was near, whiſpered to me, and as I turned about, ſhe pointed to a corner of the church. On looking

—— O Heavens! I ſaw —— It was he, he himſelf! Yet, it is a wonder how I could diſcern him, for a cloud immediately involved my ſight, and a dizzineſs ſeized my underſtanding. My knees trembled — I fell unconſcious to the floor. On my recovery, I was ſurpriſed at finding myſelf in my chamber. My mother ſupported my head on her boſom, while her arms tenderly embraced me. I ſeemed to awake from a flattering dream; all my golden images were fled, and I avoided aſking queſtions of any body, being afraid to open my eyes to a conviction of the deception. But, how treacherous it was of this cruel girl, to raiſe in me ſuch an agitation! She has told me ſince, that he followed our carriage to the very door of the inn. What will become of me? Whither can I flee? The enemy of my peace is at hand, one town contains us both! He has traced my

aſylum!

aſylum! When he was far off, I wiſhed him nigh; now he is nigh, I wiſh him far off. What a tide of contrary deſires! A chaos of irreſolutions prevents my breathing——But, wherefore ſhould he come to Lyons? —Can it be on my account?—What is your opinion? —— This conduct announces, a thorough reſolution of following me: I apprehend it, and my heart trembles for the conſequences. However, I have formed plans of ſelf-defence, and for ſome hours have felt ſurpriſing fortitude; ſo that ſhould he actually appear before me, I can anſwer for my own prudence. Surely, I may be aſhamed of my late weakneſs! Yet, he ſhall gain no advantage by it, and I will be doubly on my guard in future. I need but call pride and anger to my aſſiſtance, and I ſhall be ſafe. Adieu! my dear friend, I have written an aukward letter; but, why

did

did he disturb me! to pursue me to my family recesses, and even the arms of my mother! This is such downright persecution, that it exasperates me. I really think I hate him. How proud would he be of his triumph, did he suspect that my disorder was occasioned by his presence; did he see the straits and stratagems to which he drives me! I have kept all day in my mother's apartment, the windows of which overlook the street. Seated near the Gothic casement, my work in my hand, that street, as I frequently snatched a view of it, appeared a forlorn solitude. Every person who was announced to us, inspired me with returning rapture. I expected to hear him named every instant, without reflecting that he is a stranger to my parents. On retiring to my chamber, I felt the fatigue of a long journey, from the agitation of my mind; a lumpish mass,

maſs, I drag heavily through the day. Yeſterday I attempted to play a tune on my harp, but my hands deſerted their office in the midſt of it. If muſic will not be courted by me, I am decidedly miſerable! What ſtruggles have I to ſuſtain with myſelf! What tormenting nights have already been my portion! How ſhocking it is, thus to experience nature at war with one's principles! But, ſince we cannot change the decrees of fate, we muſt ſubmit to them.

LET-

LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

YESTERDAY I was in deſpair; to-day I am at the ſummit of felicity, perhaps, to-morrow I ſhall be drowned in tears: thus flows the changeful tide of life, till that final moment when we ſhall be unconſcious of pain or pleaſure. You know the good Curate from whom I received my education: he viſited us this morning. Figure to yourſelf your friend at her mother's toilet, reading a book to her in a low voice. Suddenly the door of the room opened, and I ſaw the Curate enter with a young man.—No, my dear, I did not ſee him: I aroſe immediately, threw the book in a chair, and making an aukward curteſy, eſcaped to my chamber. Breathleſs I flew to the firſt chair,

with

with a palpitation of heart that I had never experienced before. I aroſe, liſtened at the door, fancied that I heard a noiſe; this occaſioned freſh agitation. My glowing cheek was applied to the lock, while the damps of fear bedewed my forehead. At that inſtant my governeſs came to call me; to follow her was indiſpenſable; what excuſe could I make! I was ſo exceedingly confuſed, that I wiſhed to hide myſelf. I ſurveyed my appearance in a glaſs, and ſaid I could not go in ſuch a figure. While I ſpoke I attempted an arrangement of my dreſs; I undid what I had juſt done, and fancied that I looked worſe than before. Deſchamps obſerving this, ſaid, will you go, or will you not? They will be puzzled to account for your abſence; ſince they came purpoſely to ſee you, and you are not indiſpoſed. At my deſire ſhe took me by the arm,

for

for my legs trembled exceedingly, till we came to the door. I entered without perceiving a ſingle object; there ſeemed to be a curtain drawn before my eyes. After ſaluting the company, I took a ſeat by my mother. The Curate preſented his friend to me; Mr. Faldoni (for it was he) made me a profound bow, without ſpeaking a ſyllable. Madame de St. Cyran put ſeveral queſtions to him about his travels, and his amuſements, with that frankneſs which encourages a return. In the mean time, I began to collect myſelf, and felt ſome degree of returning ſtrength. He touched on his reſidence at Paris. Judge of my ſituation! I fancied my mother noticed me. I bluſhed, I turned pale, I aroſe to look for my work-bag; I thought by changing the ſcene to eſcape from my confuſion, but only found myſelf the more embarraſſed. I took up a piece of

em-

embroidery, and ſet to work; when he drew near me; and while the Curate talked with my mother, he leaned forward, to inſpect, as it were, my employment. Then it was that he aſked me in a whiſper, if I did not recollect a man whom I had rendered miſerable? Not anſwering him, he ſorrowfully withdrew, giving me a look expreſſive of his inmoſt ſoul. The viſit was prolonged till it grew tedious to me, for I was on the rack all the time, and ſadly needed a reſpite from my torments. I know not when he went out, though my eyes followed him mechanically, without being ſenſible of what paſſed around me. I even thought him preſent, when he was far off. While I was in a profound revery, my mother luckily left me free. He is, then, miſerable! ſaid I, and the tears ſtarted to my eyelids. During theſe reflections, every thing ſuddenly aſſumed

a new

a new face; I ſeemed to enjoy a ſecond birth. The dreſſing room breathed the air of Faldoni; and he had left that ſecret charm which attends him, in every corner of it. I felt more chearful and contented; and, in fact, have not for a long time known ſo pure a pleaſure. Now, my dear friend, conſider, and tell me whether I have not betrayed to him the ſentiment of my boſom? Indeed, I greatly fear it. Otherwiſe, would he have dared, on the firſt viſit, to riſk the diſcourſe he held with me? Was it not, on his part, at leaſt an indiſcreet confeſſion? I am neither ſatisfied with him, nor myſelf. It is in vain that I make a covenant with my eyes, my mouth, and my heart. What will become of me ſo near the charmer? Ah! Couſin, I am a very weak creature! Your letter has ſafely reached me, under the protection of friendſhip. I was doing the honours

of

of a private ball, when it was brought to me; but I ſlipped from the company to read it. I now give entirely into the diſſipation of the moment; it is one perpetual round of balls and entertainments. I ſkip and frolic about; and after dancing a good deal, am leſs diſtracted by diſagreeable reflections. Thus I may paſs with the world for a votary to pleaſure; but can one be ſo, when the heart is uneaſy at home?

LET-

LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

MY dear friend, to what lengths may a ſuſceptible and unſuſpecting ſoul be driven by an attachment like mine! You will ſay this remark is made rather too late — but have I really deſerved to be impoſed on? I aſſiſted at a concert, where Faldoni was preſent, and happening to intimate a wiſh to ſee a new ballad, he undertook to procure it for me. He ſnatched an opportunity, in the confuſion of that noiſy aſſembly, to addreſs me while my mother was abſent, and preſented the ballad he had promiſed me. I took and opened it, but on perceiving that it contained a note, ſlipped in between the leaves, I coloured with ſhame and ſurpriſe, and was about to return his papers,

when he diſappeared. I felt a degree of reſentment againſt the traitor who had thus enſnared me. You cannot conceive my embarraſſment, as I really apprehended that the future colour of my life depended on that fatal writing. When I returned home, my firſt intention was to throw myſelf at my mother's feet, and deliver into her hands the billet unopened. At the moment I was about to accoſt her, an univerſal tremor pervaded my frame; the image of my unfortunate lover preſented itſelf to my mind; I ſaw him baniſhed from me for ever; I heard his lamentations; pity ſeduced me; I retreated weeping, and flew to ſhut myſelf up in my chamber. I laid the billet on the table, my arms fell uſeleſsly languid by my ſide, and I continued a long time ſitting motionleſs, with my eyes fixed on the paper which I dared not open. I repreſented to myſelf that keeping

it was a tacit approbation of its contents, and encouraged additional liberties. But who can reſiſt the temptation of learning ſentiments that intereſt the heart? At firſt I was for returning the paper without opening it; yet that would have been an expreſſion of contempt, which was not deſerved. At laſt I came to the reſolution of opening, and returning it after the peruſal. This, which was my ultimate deciſion, ſeemed at once calculated to ſatisfy my inclination and my duty: as if virtue were to be bribed, and there were an underſtanding between her and the irregularity of the paſſions! Yet, when I took up the letter, my hand trembled that I could not open it. Two days paſſed, and Mr. Faldoni came to the houſe. Imagine a criminal before the judge, and you will have ſome faint idea of my ſituation. My bluſhes, my confuſion, my downcaſt eyes,

my perplexity, my diſtreſs at his approach, all ſpoke my inward agitation. He ſat down beſide me, and I fancied that he was equally affected. He aſked in a low whiſper, if I liked the ballad?—I made him no anſwer. Your ſilence, added he, informs me what you think of the innocent trick, which I have adopted to tell you thoſe ſentiments which I could no longer conceal. It is true, anſwered I, that every trick is beneath a gentleman; but, I did not apprehend one in the preſent inſtance. I ſuppoſed, Sir, that you had made a miſtake; for ſurely you did not deſign to write to me; that is a liberty which, I hope, no part of my behaviour has warranted. I will add farther, an aſſurance that I have not read your billet, and that you ſhall have it again the firſt opportunity in my power. He appeared dejected, while I withdrew without allowing him time to

make any apology. The company ſat down to play, and it was impoſſible for him to ſnatch another opportunity of ſpeaking to me. During the game, my eyes were frequently fixed on him, and ſeeing him change colour, I began to be alarmed. I was on the rack all the evening, and ate no ſupper. When the hour for that arrived, I gave vent to the ſighs which I had ſuppreſſed in the day time. A violent fever preyed on my ſpirits, and in one of the fits I was driven for relief to the opening of the fatal billet, and feaſting my eyes with its contents. I read it over a dozen times, and as often bathed it with my tears. See, my friend, ſee what he has written; and ſay if it is poſſible to be more tender, more reſpectful, more worthy of my eſteem?

LETTER VII.

FALDONI TO TERESA.

IS it to you that I venture to write? What an attempt! By what fond hope am I betrayed! Oh, madam, pardon my preſumption! pity my madneſs! I ſcarce can tell my own wiſhes—I am grown a ſtranger to myſelf. All I diſcover in the diſorder of my ſenſes, is, that I am impelled to you by an irreſiſtible energy. Indeed you muſt not believe that my paſſion is voluntary, or that I dare to cheriſh it with pleaſure. Ah! could I flee from you! could I yet eſcape! I would go to the world's end; I would plunge in ſolitary receſſes where your name could never more alarm my ear. But, I am urged by fate; reaſon is vanquiſhed, and your preſence, by a ſecret charm, is become

become neceſſary to my very exiſtence. I have ſought relief in crouds, at diſtance from you. I have endeavoured to forget myſelf in momentary diſſipation. But in the midſt of univerſal diſtraction, I have been alone; or rather you have attended me every where. Were it not in vain to reſiſt longer? Am I criminal for breaking a ſilence which no human reſolution could preſerve? My heart is too full to withhold. Conſumed with love and grief, finding no reſource in itſelf, it flies to the ſacred aſylum of Tereſa's feet. How would you ſympathiſe with me could you know my condition! I burn, I languiſh, I hourly conſume. Sometimes I could wiſh never to have ſeen you; and flatter myſelf with the reſolution to avoid you, but if I paſs a day without ſeeing you, am on the rack of deſpondence. I roam about like one diſtracted; every thing is wanting to

me; I am obliged to trace you; and as ſoon as you appear, a flame ruſhes through my veins; my heart ſprings towards you; I no longer exiſt but where you are. Diſtreſs! Anguiſh! Inexorable torture! Conſummate horror of hopeleſs affection! To love and deſire, without daring to confeſs a paſſion. To be within reach of happineſs, and not obtain it. To behold you every day more lovely and enchanting! Every day to be more enamoured of your charms! To ſave myſelf by retreat, to face again my beauteous foe, to have recourſe to flight, and, after all, to return! To be allured to the ambuſcade, to reſiſt, yet to yield at the very inſtant that I thought myſelf triumphant! Celeſtial charms! Inexhauſtible ſource of delight for the happy man who ſhall be the object of your choice! Can any ſituation be more deplorable than mine? On my knees

I con-

I conjure you to grant me one word of comfort, or to baniſh me for ever from your preſence! One word would reſtore me to life. What do I deſire but permiſſion to adore the moſt charming of her ſex that I have ſeen on earth? So pure a paſſion cannot injure you; and if you will only not forbid it, you will conſtitute my felicity. I ſhall contemplate your perfections in ſilence, cheriſh your looks, treaſure your accents, and return contented. But my hopes are too ſanguine, and theſe are the illuſions of an amorous imagination. I own it is audacity to have written to you. I have offended you, and ſubmit to the dictates of your reſentment. But, what puniſhment can you inflict on me which is not ſurpaſſed by the torments I endure from the paſſion you have kindled in my boſom?

RURAL FELICITY.

The ballad which accompanied the preceding letter.

I.

HOW ſoft are the notes of the ſpring!
What fragrance exhales from the grove!
Ye birds, taught by you, I would ſing,
And here I for ever could rove.

II.

Though its bottom is clear, yet the rill
Delights from the rock to deſcend;
So I, from ambition's ſteep hill,
My days in the valley would end.

III.

The waves that, ſo ruffled awhile,
Were, glittering, daſh'd in the ſun,
On the bordering violets ſmile,
And kiſs them, and murmuring run.

IV.

Thus let me the ſplendor and ſtrife
Of the rich and exalted forego;
With beauty ſtill ſweeten my life,
And love's gentle ſtorm only know!

V.

What joy the bee murmurs impart!
The zephyrs that curl the blue waves,
Soft whiſpers that ſteal to the heart,
And echo that talks in the caves!

VI.

Peace, babblers, or only repeat
The ſilver deſcent of the ſprings;
Fond ſhepherds frame here no deceit,
But ſcandal has numerous wings.

VII.

I call'd you to witneſs, 'tis true,
The vows that to Phillis I ſwore;
Methinks ſtill her bluſhes I view,
And, trembling, forgiveneſs implore.

VIII.

Her charms I will grave in my heart,
Her name upon every tree;
And ſooner ſhall love want a dart,
Than fickleneſs harbour with me.

LETTER VIII.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

I BEHOLD him no more. They ſay he is ſick. It is, then, my cruelty that has driven him to deſpair. His letter did not deſerve ſuch treatment; for, after all, were its contents ſo impertinent? What offence could it give me? He only aſked leave to ſee me——But, why aſk that? Was not he free to come at any hour? Probably this cautious letter contains a ſubtile poiſon! It muſt be allowed that he is a great flatterer. Heavens! how laviſh he is in my praiſe. Tell me frankly, my dear, if you know your couſin in his picture? He ſings the ſeducing ſong of the ſyren, and ſtrews with flowers the path of de-

ſtruction.

ſtruction. Would to heaven that I poſſeſſed one half of the perfections that he ſays are my portion! Alas! I ſee nothing in myſelf but a ſilly girl, void of fortitude and reſolution, and not even proof to the ſoporifics of praiſe. He calls me kind, and not without reaſon; I am but too much ſo, it was my duty to have been more ſevere to him——At leaſt I ought to have anſwered him with a degree of pride. Is it true, Conſtantia, that I have not done my duty? Inexorable duty! ſince it tears me from the object of my ſoul's happineſs. I would fain triumph over myſelf; but it is regiſtered in Heaven that I muſt love him.—— How he trembled the laſt time on approaching me!——I was concerned; and on the point of forgiving him. Haſte to me, dear couſin, I need your friendly ſupport! A word from your

own lips, ſpoken on the ſpot, would be more effectual than all thoſe tardy epiſtles that do not reach me till after an age of anxious expectation. I am continually led into freſh ſituations of embarraſſment, and a thouſand new ſentiments ſucceed to thoſe which I have in confidence imparted to you, by the time I receive your anſwers. A ſtrange foreboding oppreſſes my heart, I look backward on the paſt, and regret with ſighs my early years of happineſs that muſt never return. I am conſumed with melancholy, and the aſpect of Heaven is as gloomy as my ſoul. For two days the rain has deſcended in torrents. It is a very ſeaſonable period, truly, to talk to me of merriment! To-morrow we are to have a noiſy aſſembly of muſic and dancing in a neighbouring field. How unwelcome is the invitation! Can

one

one be gay, when the heart is corroded with anguiſh? Can one ſmile, when the tears are ready to guſh from the eyelids?

LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

WHAT a diſmal holiday! To ſee every body in the town, except the object of my peculiar eſteem! I have danced and ſung; but leave you to gueſs with what eaſe! The day was tedious to diſtraction! How ſlowly move the hours, under the preſſure of ſorrow! The cuſtoms of the world are very abſurd. What occaſion had I for this buſtle? And did they put themſelves to all this trouble on my account? Why was I not conſulted on the means of promoting my pleaſure? I ſhould then have been left at liberty. I am ſurrounded by a pile of your letters, and the fatal billet lies in ſight;

ſight; what ſighs has it already coſt me!——Deſchamps has juſt told me, that he has been ſeen walking under our windows, but ſo pale and thin!—Do you not think me mad? I quit my pen, and by mechanical inſtinct fly to the chamber of my mother. But, reaſon aſſumes its empire, and I return.——Yet, I muſt pauſe to breathe, it is impoſſible to proceed immediately, for my ſpirits are in violent agitation. During my abſence, O Heavens!—— There has been laid on my table——treacherous outrage! A paper written by the ſame hand! Conſtantia, I am beſet by enemies; I will call Deſchamps, ſhe too muſt be of his party. Ah! who would not be ſo?—She has confeſſed the whole, but drawn ſuch a moving picture of the ſeducer as none could reſiſt. She was overcome by his diſtreſs! She ſaw him

weep;

weep; and he proteſted that his life depended on the delivery of this note. A refuſal might have plunged him into deſpair, and rendered her accountable for his death. She therefore made him promiſe this ſhould be the laſt time of his writing to me, and ſhe would riſk my diſpleaſure. But, were ſhe to be baniſhed for it from my preſence, ſhe could not have ſlighted his petition! —I believe ſo, ſaid I to myſelf, and concealing my diſorder, I threatened to diſmiſs her, if ſhe expoſed me again to ſuch an inſult. I threw down the note, and deſired her to return it. She excuſed herſelf from obeying me, and bade me conſider the fatal conſequences that might reſult from her complying with my commands. Between love and vexation, I was half beſide myſelf. Where will this end? I know not

what

what will become of me. Why did I not return his firſt letter! See how one falſe ſtep inevitably occaſions another! Into what an abyſs of difficulties have I plunged myſelf!

LET-

LETTER X.

FALDONI TO TERESA.

IT is with trembling that I addreſs you a ſecond time. Forgive me, Madam, forgive me. I will importune you no more; I would only obtain pardon, and throw myſelf at your feet for mercy. Suffer me to raiſe my dying accents to you; allow this conſolation to my grief, before you condemn me to perpetual ſilence. How ſeverely have you treated me! What, then, has been my offence? With too much veneration for you to declare all my ſentiments, I ſuppreſſed the glowing expreſſions ever ready to ſtart from my pen; and portrayed in fainter colours the ardent emotions of my ſoul. How imperfect a repreſentation did my letter give of the tumult of my heart!

And

And yet for that I riſked your diſpleaſure, and incurred your indignation! Wretch that I was! to write to you. But for that imprudence, you would ſtill condeſcend to liſten to me; and, perhaps, might gradually have entertained confidence and eſteem in my favour. At leaſt if I were not beloved, I ſhould not be hated. One raſh moment has deprived me of every thing; I have put you on your guard againſt me; I have obliged you to avoid me; and thus am become the outcaſt of deſpair. The recollection of my paſt happineſs will embitter my future days; I ſhall for ever look back with unavailing regret to thoſe charming hours when my imagination revelled in felicity. This very evening that you have paſſed ſentence on me, an hour, nay a minute ſince, how enviable was my ſituation! You came to me with a ſmile; your eyes beamed benignity

on me; but that look was fatal to Faldoni. My heart was rapt with celeſtial joy; a ſupernatural courage inſpired me; I was loſt in the delicious tranſport. How was it poſſible to reſiſt the neceſſity of loving you and acquainting you with my paſſion? Often was I tempted to embrace your knees with all the humility of a ſupplicant, and to deſire you would condeſcend to hear me. Why ſhould he who loves you forbear to confeſs it? Do we not ſpeak the ſame language to the Being above all beings for his adorable perfections? And are not you the Divinity of my heart? Yes, it is even ſo; you are the object of my worſhip when I proſtrate myſelf in the ſolemn temples. While my prayers aſcend to Heaven, they are addreſſed to you alone. Could I but explain the idea I have formed of your ſoul, I ſhould need no other juſtification. I con-

ſider you as an angelic being, born to promote the happineſs of all around you. I believe that you do not entertain a thought which does not tend to ſome generous action. Were I deſirous of painting virtue in her moſt amiable form I would make choice of yours. Wherever you appear, the air that you breathe, your dreſs, your words, your looks, the moſt trivial of your actions, is attended with that charm which is ſo peculiarly your own. At ſight of you all eyes are centered on your perſon; every heart is led in pleaſing captivity. When you ſpeak, the happy hearer dreads an interruption; your converſation ſuſpends the ſoul with the magic of irreſiſtible harmony. Often when I am abſent from you I ſurpriſe myſelf repeating what you have ſaid; your very motions I become natural to me, and I copy them without intention. What could I not

do,

do, inſpired by the ambition of pleaſing you! You have entirely tranſformed me! Your taſte is become mine; my way of thinking has aſpired to the elevation of yours.——— In the mean time my flames inwardly burn more fiercely; my ſufferings increaſe. I die every moment, yet ſhould reſign life with leſs regret, did your days glide ſerenely. But I have ſeen the tears ſtream from your eyes, while you painted to your friend the misfortune of too great ſenſibility. Can you, then, experience that misfortune? Can an angel feel the pains of humanity? Perhaps you too have loved. Surely, then, you muſt ſympathiſe with me, if you are no ſtranger to that ill-ſtarred paſſion, for never mortal ſhared its agonies like me. Where is Tereſa to ſave me from myſelf? Why do you flee from me? Why refuſe me an anſwer? Behold me

trembling

trembling at your feet, bathed in tears, intreating you to reſtore the peace, joy, and fortitude that I have loſt! Break this cruel ſilence, or I ſhall take it for a confirmation of your diſpleaſure, and, influenced by that idea, ruſh on an act of deſperation. My blood ſhall flow in your ſight; my laſt looks ſhall be directed to you; and if in a better world, the ſoul retains the affections which it owned in this life, charming Tereſa, the ſacred flame which you have inſpired in my boſom, ſhall glow beyond the tomb.—I muſt conclude. Oh! my full heart! I have a thouſand things to ſay, but want expreſſion.—Moſt generous of your ſex! favour me with an anſwer. In mere pity indulge me with a line! If you continue inflexible, I will deliver myſelf from this hateful load of life, to avoid your contempt. Then, perhaps, you

will feel ſome regret for having ſhortened thoſe days that I wiſhed to devote to my charmer.

LET-

LETTER XI.

TERESA TO FALDONI.

WHY have you obliged me to write you an anſwer? I was in poſſeſſion of happineſs, but am going to loſe it. I have hitherto avoided looking into myſelf, and ſurveying the ſtate of my heart. Reſolved to continue in that prudent ignorance, I indulged without remorſe ideas which I ſhould have condemned, had I traced them to their ſource. I was ſometimes, it is true, alarmed at them; but ſoon recovered the bewitching illuſion. This fortunate error might have continued much longer. Why have you removed it? What have you done! Where was the neceſſity of ſpeaking to me; but above all, of writing to me? Ah! leave me to myſelf; forbear to ſee me; forbear

to acquaint me with ſentiments which I cannot approve.—I fear that I ſhall retain but too much, for my peace, of a remembrance that I ought to eraſe. I have ſaid enough. I took up my pen with a reſolution to attempt only to calm, to conſole, and to perſuade you to live; but my heart betrays itſelf at every ſyllable. The apprehenſions that I ſuffer at the ſame time leave no doubt of my guilt. What opinion muſt you have of an indiſcreet girl who ſuffers you to ſee her weakneſs! I repeat my requeſt; remove far from me; write no more! Why ſhould you diſtreſs me farther? Are not my ſufferings already ſufficient? Why did I ever know you? What grounds have you for hope? Am I fated to complete your wiſhes? Do you not perceive that every circumſtance riſes in oppoſition? Would it not, therefore, be moſt prudent to flee from each other? Yes; that is

the neceſſary and wiſeſt conduct. I to love you! alas! were it ſo, we ſhould only be more wretched. I know not what I have written! am greatly diſtreſſed; tremble at every thing; forbode a thouſand diſaſters; indeed you have made me very miſerable!

LETTER XII.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

HAVE not you wondered at my ſilence? You ſuppoſed, to be ſure, that I was ſick? Yes, I am ſo; my head and my heart are alike diſordered. I do not live; but die daily. My torment is inexpreſſible; and has quite ſoured my diſpoſition. My taſte, my ſentiments, my conduct is no longer the ſame. I, who was ſo ſcrupulouſly delicate in all the principles of the moſt rigid honour; I, who trembled at the ſhadow of a fault; what will you ſay on learning, that I am now at the mercy of a ſtranger and my governeſs? I have ventured to receive letters; have had the weakneſs to anſwer them; but once, though, and to

prevent

prevent conſequences with which I was threatened. But I have done it, and that has obliged me ſtill to permit the raſh man who beſieges your Tereſa, to put others into my hand. Dear Conſtantia, what will become of me? My tears ſtart at the queſtion; and perhaps will one day be my only reſource. Deſchamps employs all her addreſs to comfort me. You know the goodneſs of her heart, who has lived with me from my birth, and loved me as her own child. The poor creature mingles tears with mine, execrates all lovers, and the next moment preſents me with freſh notes from the ſuitor who courts her patronage. What would you adviſe me to do? Muſt I turn her away? Muſt I forbid the other acceſs to the houſe? Muſt I ſacrifice myſelf? I know the ſeverity of my father; on the leaſt ſuſpicion of ſuch a correſpondence I

am ruined; perhaps I ſhould never more behold the day; his vengeance would plunge me into the gloom of a cloiſter. That would be the death of my mother! Beſt of mothers! Yeſterday ſhe ſpoke kindly of him who perſecutes her daughter—She drew his panegyric. Had you but ſeen the embarraſſment of your guilty friend! I could not have been more confuſed at hearing my own praiſe. What it forebodes I know not; but for ſome days my faculties have ſeemed ſuſpended. Where is happineſs to be found? and what is that chimera which eludes the purſuit of mankind? A meteor that leads them to a precipice. I fancied that a virtuous paſſion might ſtrew a few roſes among the thorns of life; I fancied that, conſidering our mutual wants and dependencies on each other, the heart might look out for a kindred heart, and by yielding

to

to the allurements of ſympathy, fulfil the intention of nature. It had not occurred to me, that what is right in the order of nature, is frequently contrary to the principles of ſociety; and that the opinion of the world is formed of us, not from things really meritorious, but from the paltry ſubſtitutes of faſhion. How can I rectify this error in my opinion? My original ideas are bewildered; and I have no certain rule left for my conduct. If conſcience tells me, that I ought to obey the eternal laws inſcribed on my heart, what doubts and diſtractions confound me! Yet why ſhould we embitter this tranſitory life with ſuch ſolicitous ſpeculations?—You will think that I have a peculiar way of reaſoning, and wonder, perhaps, at the ſingular turn of my morality. Courage, my dear friend! My ſyſtem ſhall not injure my manners: I ſub-

mit with dutiful acquieſcence to the laws of which I complain.—The blooming ſpring returns unwelcome to me; our concerts, our aſſemblies, our plays, will be no more. Farewell to the opportunities that I enjoyed of ſeeing the object of my love; I muſt forego theſe for baniſhment to rural ſolitudes. How ſuddenly is the face of nature changed! I knew the time when I was tranſported at regaining the fields, and viewing the return of their verdure. But it muſt be confeſſed that there is much inſipidity and ſameneſs in a country life. We ſhall ſet out for Ormes at the end of April. Will not my Conſtantia come to enliven her friend's ſolitude? I tremble by anticipation at this journey: for it is already the ſubject of diſcourſe. You know how fond my mother is of her eſtate; every year ſhe makes ſome improvement on it;

it; ſhe amuſes herſelf in planting, and delights in the enjoyment of her own labour; to walk beneath the ſhades that have ſprung up under her inſpection; to reſume thoſe daily employments which ſhe has unwillingly given up in town. There every hour has its allotted buſineſs; ſhe forms around her ſeat a little empire, by her bounties. She is the queen of the villagers, who love her to adoration; and ſhe gives up her gentle ſoul with delight to all the minutiæ of rural œconomy. My father, engaged in lawſuits, is frequently abſent; he propoſes to ſpend the ſpring in Paris, we only ſee him here like a flaſh of lightning. He came in laſt when Mr. Faldoni was in the houſe, whom he had never ſeen. You know his haughty manner of looking for the firſt time at people whom he thinks his inferiors. I was not without ap-

prehenſion at his entrance; every body roſe as he approached, and my mother preſented Mr. Faldoni to him as the friend of the Curate. He ſurveyed him with a ſtately air, gave him a ſlight inclination of the head, and darted into another apartment, muttering ſome expreſſions of civility, which were loſt at the door. I was confounded at this reception; Mr. Faldoni bore it like a man accuſtomed to the world, who is always eaſy in every ſituation. He continued to converſe with ſeeming cheerfulneſs, but I perceived that he coloured, and that he was not very well pleaſed with the maſter of the houſe. Were I not the daughter of Monſieur de St. Cyran, I ſhould be at no loſs what name to give to this cruel ſurlineſs; nor would my reflections ſpare the arrogance of a gentleman, whoſe manners exhibit

the

the loftineſs which ſhould be reſerved for his ſentiments. But it is my duty to lament and hold my tongue!

LETTER XIII.

FALDONI TO TERESA.

WHAT occaſions your preſent inquietude! Wherefore thoſe ſighs which ſteal from you; thoſe melancholy glances directed at me; that languor which invades your whole frame? Can I be the author of your ſufferings! My doubts are too diſtreſſing! condeſcend to relieve me from them; if you ſpeak but the word, I will depart. But you retain a confirmed ſilence; I perceive that you dread my approach, and ſtudy to avoid me. If by ſome lucky chance I am thrown near you, your diſtreſs is viſible, you veil yourſelf with every ſurrounding object, and ſeem to court an aſylum in every thing from my preſence. Your younger ſiſter never leaves you; and when

I would

I would avail myſelf of a moment's ſolitude to ſpeak to you, you call her to your relief. Is it from me that you flee? Is it me that you are obliged to miſtruſt? I have, then, loſt your eſteem! You heap contempt on me; and join, in diſgracing me, with him whoſe blood and pride you inherit. My ſituation is diſmal; and I muſt deliver myſelf from its horrors. I will go; I will flee; I will tear myſelf from this fatal ſpot. Yes, you ſhall be obeyed, too cruel fair, you ſhall be ſatisfied. But I ſhall go forlorn, deſperate, the victim of a deadly poiſon, deteſting life, abhorring nature, and wiſhing for nothing but annihilation in the tomb. It is too much at once to endure your hatred and the torments of a never-dying paſſion! While there was the leaſt hope of moving you, I found reſources in my fortitude; but now the bright illuſion is vaniſhed, my ſtrength forſakes me,

me, and my heart fails. Adieu! thou moſt lovely and moſt adored of women! Soft cheerer of my life! Bright angel! whom I thought the miniſter of Heaven to eaſe the load of my exiſtence. I ſhall no more behold you; the ſentence is paſt, I muſt leave you, I muſt abandon every comf t!

LET-

LETTER XIV.

TERESA TO FALDONI.

STAY, Faldoni; and do not add to my diſtreſs your removal! It is too late. O, ſir, to what an extremity have you reduced me! Muſt I acknowledge to you a ſentiment which I perceive with terror, and which I endeavoured to conceal from myſelf? How much, alas! was I miſtaken, in fancying that the deſire which I felt to pleaſe you aroſe only from eſteem! I gave myſelf up to it without apprehenſion; I eagerly courted the danger, and now cannot hope for aſſiſtance from reaſon. I have abandoned her empire; my heart is overcome by its own frailty, and I have not the leaſt glimpſe of deliverance. O you, whom I believe to be virtuous,

ous, do not disappoint my expectation; shew yourself such as I would be if able. Prostrate before you, my eyes stream with tears, that bathe the characters as I form them. It is to you, to your humanity that I appeal in behalf of an unfortunate woman whose sufferings proceed from you. I no longer desire you to forsake me; I am conscious that I could not support the loss of you; but, for heaven's sake, moderate those sentiments which I too sadly partake, and wish to bury in oblivion! Shew me but a glimpse of that affection which drives me to distraction. If my life is really valuable to you, do not increase those fires with which I consume. Gracious God! What is my condition! Do I, then, dare to confess such secrets; I who had sworn to let them descend with me to the grave? I should have veiled my disgrace with the shades of death!

What

What is become of my pride? Have I entirely loſt my boaſted dignity of ſentiment? You are the firſt man who has mentioned love to me, and I ſurrender my heart without a ſtruggle! I give myſelf up to your mercy, while you ſolicit my pity. Diſpoſe, then, of my lot, ſince my affection for you is decreed. I will no more look forward into futurity for evils that cannot be avoided; and voluntarily ſhut my eyes on the dangerous conſequences of ſo alarming a connection. I have been a long while prevented by ſolicitous apprehenſions from embracing the happineſs that lay before me. Even at this inſtant of writing to you, I am oppreſſed with melancholy. I cannot be ſaid to guide my pen. Ah! Sir, do I make you a confident of my diſtreſs? Yes, your candid ſoul is the ſacred repoſitory to which I truſt the emotions of my own. I fly to your

arms

arms which are expanded to receive me, and am happy in repoſing on the boſom of virtue. Can you deceive my expectations, and become the object of my averſion? No; you will be generous, and not abuſe my confidence. You may expect every thing from me with this limitation. If agreeable, call me your friend, your ſiſter; I promiſe you the tenderneſs of one. What blameleſs pleaſures will flow from ſuch an union! An union which innocence itſelf may avow with tranſport. It will reſtore to me that confidence which I have loſt. A bluſh will no more overſpread my countenance, when I hear your name; at your approach I ſhall not be diſturbed by that fear which at preſent alarms me; I ſhall liſten to your diſcourſe without apprehenſion; and ſhall anſwer you no longer with the tremulous voice of a criminal. I muſt

love

love, but the ſentiment I propoſe to admit, will fill the vacuity of my heart; and perhaps any other is troubleſome. Love is ſo violent a paſſion, that we ſhould be very careful to avoid its tyranny. O you, who will be ever dear to me, grant me my petition! Recollect your fortitude; ſubmit without murmuring to the rigour of my fate; and content yourſelf with the friendſhip which I proffer to you. Conſider that we may ſee and ſpeak to each other without remorſe; be united in indiſſoluble bands; enjoy a mutual participation of pains and pleaſures. And will not all this be a conſiderable degree of happineſs? What more has one a right to expect from the indulgence of a proſperous love?

LETTER XV.

FALDONI TO TERESA.

BY what charm have you inſtantaneouſly effaced every veſtige of my ſufferings? Is it poſſible that I can be he who called on death in pity to ſtrike me with his dart? And what, then, are you, who can at your pleaſure raiſe me from the depth of miſery, to the ſupreme pinnacle of felicity? O extaſy of love! O tranſporting delirium of joy to which I have hitherto lived a ſtranger! Are you, indeed, become my friend and ſiſter? I may now tell you every hour that I love you. You will condeſcend to hear me, and I ſhall be bleſſed with the tendereſt confeſſion from your own lips. Is not all this an illuſion? Have I rightly underſtood the con-

tents of your bewitching letter, which I could devour with my kiſſes? Or has not my too ſanguine paſſion betrayed me to a miſtake, in ſuppoſing the charming epiſtle was meant for me? Gods! how ſoft is the language! How has it elevated me in my own eſtimation! Yes, I will juſtify your choice, I will render myſelf worthy of your regard, you ſhall have no occaſion to bluſh for the object of your love. I deceive you! I make an ungrateful return for the confidence repoſed in me! Ah! Tereſa, you know not the power of your ſceptre, and the awful obedience which it commands. There is no heart ſo ſavage but it muſt be charmed to ſoftneſs by the influence of your eyes; even vice would receive the ſtamp of virtue at ſight of your perfections. — I deceive you, and provoke the dreadful vengeance of your threatened hatred! How could you

apprehend

apprehend me capable of such a treachery, too suspicious friend! Heavens! when I degenerate to such perjury let me be annihilated! May the avenging thunderbolt of divine displeasure consume my very ashes, and not a trace remain that such a monster ever trod the earth!—But no more of such gloomy ideas! My eager fancy paints rapturous pictures of our blameless union. You will suffer me to read the rising emotions of your heart; you will even allow me to share them, and we shall henceforth possess but one soul. Yes; I submit to your pleasure; consider me as a brother—I would be every thing dear to you. Why cannot you allow me a more tender name? But any one will be agreeable that marks the friendship between us. For my part I shall take the liberty, Teresa, to call you my angel, my treasure, my life. Why should you not be mine? You

shall

ſhall be my ſoul's beſt good. How ſhall I bleſs the happy moments when I may enjoy your preſence! What pangs do I endure from your abſence! I have hardly an opportunity of ſpeaking to you once in a week. Yeſterday you were viſible to me but for a moment. And then how plunged in ſorrow! For God's ſake, get the better of a melancholy that deſtroys me; liſten to the perſuaſive voice of nature; baniſh far away thoſe apprehenſions that would interrupt our felicity. Youth quickly vaniſhes; the years have wings; and age ſurpriſes us without having taſted pleaſure. What evil can flow from ſo refined a ſentiment? You are miſtaken, Tereſa; virtue cannot diſapprove an honourable inclination, and in a generous heart love embelliſhes every perfection. Since I felt this paſſion for you, my taſte is improved and ennobled; I have more exalted ideas of the beau-

tiful and ſublime; and I never leave you without the ambition of rendering myſelf more worthy of your eſteem. I ſhould bluſh at preſent to commit a weakneſs; and from the elevation to which you have raiſed me, I view with contempt the grovelling paſſions that degrade humanity. How reſpectable is a ſincere affection! A lover ſeems to be under the protection of univerſal nature, and to claim the ſympathy of all his fellow creatures. What a new appearance has the world aſſumed in my eyes! I am ſurrounded with a perpetual ſcene of enchantments. How charming was the walk where you juſt ſhewed yourſelf! You ſeemed to leave your traces behind you, as the fabulous deities ſcattered over their paths ambroſial odours. I ſtill behold your light garment floating on the graſs; and ſit down with rapture on the ſpot marked by your footſteps. Oh! how

lovely was my Tereſa when ſhe graced the ball that evening with her preſence! Your dancing, your attractions, your dreſs, was univerſally admired; a greater degree of elegance and modeſty could never unite. I was jealous of your partners; how happy were they in meeting the glances of your eyes; in approaching that ſymmetry of form; in preſſing a hand which might communicate the thrill of extaſy to the heart of a king! M*** whom you honoured with your arm, and who walked a long time in your company, racked my boſom with a ſenſation I had never felt before. You had refuſed me that favour, and I was reduced to the humiliating neceſſity of following mournfully behind. Ah! Tereſa, what did I not ſuffer from your denial! How painful it is to be condemned to ſilence when the heart glows with love, and the words crowd

to the lips to expreſs with energy the paſſion by which we are conſumed! What muſt they ſuffer who love you without hope, if the favoured object whom you condeſcend to encourage, and bleſs with your ſmiles, has reaſon to complain!—Do I complain? Can I be ſo unjuſt? Am I not indulged with your friendſhip? What more can my preſumption require?

LET-

LETTER XVI.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

YOU know the indulgent fondneſs of my mother, and how ſtudious ſhe is to promote my pleaſures. In the abſence of Monſieur de St. Cyran, who has made an excurſion into the country, we have had a delightful entertainment at the diſtance of a ſmall league from the town. Monſieur the Curate, Faldoni, a ſmiling group of accompliſhed young people, my mamma ever happy to ſee all around her pleaſed, a virtuous freedom that accompanied us in our paſtimes, a trip on the water, muſic and dances, a chearful ſupper, the moon beaming to light us on our return home—ſo charming a ſcene altogether

ſtill delights my imagination in the recollection. While every body beſides was loſt in the general buſtle, I enjoyed one of the ſweeteſt hours of my life. *He* was near me, and ſpoke to me.—Every word that flowed from his lips entered the very receſſes of my ſoul, and diffuſed inexpreſſible happineſs. My eyes were not dry; and as I fixed them on him, emboldened by night, I perceived his were wet with tears. Divine ſympathy, how great is thy power! I felt an emotion unknown before, and raiſed my handkerchief for relief. I was obliged to ſit down, when a gloomy train of ideas took poſſeſſion of my mind; and the evils that awaited me appeared in dreadful proſpect. I was quite overcome by it. The Curate, who was with us, appeared concerned for my diſorder, viewing us both with a look of the moſt friendly compaſ-

 ſion.

ſion. My fancy reſembled him to a patriarch ſurrounded by his children. The venerable paſtor! He has none of that auſterity common to his brethren; his lips impart words of peace and conſolation like a ſalutary balſam. Perhaps the reſpect I feel for him ariſes from that paternal regard which he has always ſhewn to me: however that be, he is the only man who has given me a juſt idea of the beneficent Being to whom he is the miniſter. He took hold of my hand, which I ſuffered to ſlide into his. You would have been affected at the ſight of the good old man, ſoftened by my ſufferings, and encouraging me to endure them patiently by his heavenly diſcourſes. For I had deſired him not to forſake me. Not that I miſtruſt myſelf; but am more ſerene in his company. Sometimes I am inclined to confeſs my weakneſs,

to him; he might enlighten me with his advice; his ſuperior underſtanding might diſperſe the gloom in which I wander. Perhaps it is not yet too late to think of a retreat; but a falſe delicacy prevents me from taking the ſeemingly eligible ſtep; the dread of not daring to obey his voice; the flowery precipice down which I ſlide, and am pleaſed with the deſcent; in ſhort, the fatal aſpect of my ſtars triumphs over the ſaving whiſpers of this gracious inſpiration. An impreſſion of tender melancholy remained on my mind all the reſt of the evening. Faldoni was deſired to ſing; he took a lute and accompanied it with his voice; the air was ſimple, the words affecting, indeed too much ſo for me. I withdrew from the grove in which we were aſſembled, and was ſo exceedingly fooliſh as to ſuffer the tears to ſtart from my

eyelids.

eyelids. They thought me indiſpoſed; too truly I was ſo! How my heart fluttered! Woe to thoſe who love! What torture! What anguiſh! What continual diſtreſs, agitation, and alarm! Heavens! is there no relief? Muſt that ſeducing phantom ever haunt my imagination? Muſt my boſom ever ſwell with ſighs? Muſt my eyes ſtill ſtream with tears? Gracious God, reſume thy gift, this load of life! I am unequal to ſuſtain it; and muſt I ſhare the burden of that unfortunate? —I ſee him a prey to melancholy, abſorbed in perplexity, ſunk in deſpair. His looks dread to meet mine; his voice is uttered in trembling accents. It is evident that he ſuffers, but dares not complain. Such is the diſmal tenor of life! Yet we muſt drag it heavily to the gulph where all things terminate! For my part I cannot underſtand what is meant by hap-

py people. Where are they to be found? If the tendereſt ſentiment in nature only communicates pain, who can flatter themſelves with exemption from miſery? Sometimes my mind is aſſaulted by ominous apprehenſions; till I am afraid to look around me. Corpſes, tombs and doleful ſpectres haunt my bewildered imagination. I ſeem to walk among the phantoms and converſe with them; groans iſſue from the monuments beneath my feet; I diſtinguiſh the voice of my lover; he calls me, I ruſh into the caverns of death. — No, it is not a paſſion that torments me thus; it is a delirium of love. But my greateſt trouble is to conceal from him the exceſs of my affection. You know not what ſtruggles I endure to gain the victory over myſelf. Alas! he is too well acquainted with what I would ſuppreſs. I have unfortunately

nately said too much, and my pen, without adding another line, is already guilty.

LETTER XVII.

FALDONI TO TERESA.

DEAR Teresa, why are your charming lips so seldom softened to a smile? Did you but know how much it becomes you! Yet your melancholy is not less interesting; I could only wish that it were not the effect of grief; but the habit of your mind. How was I distressed on your account during that holiday, the remembrance of which I shall ever retain! How was I tortured by your tears! Yet I own that my pains were accompanied with a sweetness inexpressible. I envied not the idle mirth that prevailed around me; the sentiment that I shared with you rendered me far more happy. What a powerful charm there is in grief! What a tender melancholy

lancholy in love! May they often diffuſe their enchantment through my boſom! May my mind be diſſolved in their delicious languor! — What are all the amuſements of an impertinent world in your preſence! But tell me, my friend, have you experienced, like me that neceſſity of loving; that vague inſtinctive deſire which pants to fix itſelf on a particular object; that diſmal void in the heart which renders pleaſure inſipid, and which can be filled with nothing ſhort of love? I ſeemed all my life before to have been in ſearch of you; my heart was at a loſs for a companion. It was in vain to ſeek for it among the beauties of the day, whoſe every glance was to me equally indifferent. I invoked the favourite object of my fancy, the idea of my Tereſa; but, ah! how long you delayed to hear my prayer. I was ſurpriſed to ſee the reſt of mankind amuſed with every momentary

trifle,

trifle, while nothing had the power of pleasing me. At last you came; I saw you; and from that instant my fate was determined. How irresistibly have you taken possession of all my soul! Could I be deprived of seeing you and breathe another hour? It is to no purpose that I endeavour to suppress this tormenting thought; it pursues me incessantly, and haunts me even in your presence.

A week since you were at the ball. What a sad reverse! To night I must be there alone. You will not go this evening to the play.—I shall not see you. I must use myself to support absence, as in a month's time I shall lose you. The idea of the country, where you are going to bury yourself, is to me disgusting. Spring has no longer any charms for me; and Winter is hardly more agreeable, since it admits

admits ſo few occaſions of my ſpeaking to you.

I have run about all day without plan or deſign, by turns vexed, diſtracted, dejected. I was deſirous of writing to you, but my head was too much diſordered. I lay by my pen, and flew to the theatre; the piece was exceedingly dull to me, and I left it. Alas! my heart is too eager to meet the object of its deſires. Impatience tyranniſes over me; and the ſource of my happineſs becomes my torment. How often have I wiſhed for you today! I have walked under your windows, without being able to ſee you; yet it was a kind of pleaſure to me, to behold the inſenſible walls that confine the ſum of my affections. How tranſitory is pleaſure! And how dreary the ſolitude to which we are abandoned by her flight! My charming friend, Tereſa, how painful it is not

to

to ſee each other conſtantly, when one wiſhes to be always together! I have explored with an aching eye every ſpot you viſited yeſterday evening. I have again ſeen the grove, the rivulet, and the green bank which you choſe for a ſeat. But all this to me was naked and deſert. I could not remain there, for at every ſtep my recollection was rouſed to freſh torture. Surely with the poſſeſſion of happineſs we ſhould loſe the remembrance! Would it not be better to forget it entirely, than to retain ideas which aggravate its loſs?

LET-

LETTER XVIII.

TERESA TO THE CURATE.

I CONJURE you, Sir, fly hither on the wings of friendſhip to my aſſiſtance. Save me from the dangers that ſurround me; ſave me, if poſſible, from myſelf! What could you think when you ſaw my emotions on Saturday? Your generous conſolations penetrated my heart; you revived my dying fortitude. Moſt beneficent of men! and worthy to be reſpected of all mankind! it is you that I implore, and ſeem at the inſtant to addreſs that God of goodneſs of whom you are the image below. I dare to raiſe my looks towards you, and to make you acquainted with all my weakneſs. What an unbounded title you have to my confidence! You who were my

ſurety

ſurety in the covenant made for me, when I entered on my career through this vale of tears; you, whoſe affection has never failed me from the moment of my birth. Ah! Sir, pity my diſtreſs; enlighten me with your counſels; ſtretch out an aſſiſting hand to your ſinking daughter! What have I done? What ought I to do? Whither can I flee? Where can I find an aſylum from the woes that purſue me? Alas! I fear that it is too late, but, happen what will, let the ſecret of my ſoul remain concealed in your boſom; for ever guard from the eye of ſuſpicion and curioſity the inviolable and ſacred depoſit. It is true that I love, and that I love to a degree of frenzy; it is a fever that revels in my veins; I languiſh with a conſuming paſſion; and wonder how I have ventured to diſcloſe it to you. In the lethargy of my reaſon I was unable to do it. Heaven muſt have been my guide;

guide; and perhaps to-morrow I ſhould attempt the taſk in vain. I even feel a ſtrong temptation not to ſend this letter; were I to peruſe it, I were undone. But while I have ſtrength I will proceed; and ſince my ruin is determined, I ſhall have leſs to reproach myſelf with, after having obeyed the impulſe of virtue.

You have ſeen, Sir, the diſturber of my repoſe; he is known to you; he has lived with you; I need not name him. Who but he could have inſpired me with this tenderneſs? Though I do not write to you to draw his panegyric, and extenuate my ſhame; he has virtues that raiſe eſteem, and a degree of ſenſibility far from common. Why ſhould I not ſpeak this language, if it is a tribute his due? I am perſuaded that he is well born, though not a favourite of fortune.

He

He is gentle, yet feelingly alive to every delicate injury, with all that energy which attends an honeſt and elevated mind conſcious of its own dignity. Superior to the changes of life, he is not controlled by neceſſity, but emboldened by the increaſe of obſtacles. Above depreſſion, he paſſes through the world with the rough frankneſs of independence; thinks freely, and ſpeaks as he thinks. How directly ought one to act towards a man ſo deſerving of eſteem! Unguarded Tereſa is but too much his ſlave; and were I my own miſtreſs, the gift of my hand ſhould ſoon follow that of my heart. But my father would never conſent to the union; this I know, and foreſee all the conſequences. Why ſhould I cheriſh a forlorn hope? Nay, more, my family has other objects in view for me; perhaps at this inſtant I am on the point of becoming their victim! Begone, then, too flattering

tering illuſion which I ſuffered to charm my imagination! Falſe image of mutual happineſs! I have indulged you too long; and now bid adieu to you for ever. Yet I will venture to aſk you one favour; it is to impart the balm of conſolation to the innocent but unhappy author of my ſufferings. Deſire him to remove from hence; but do not tell him it is my wiſh he ſhould do ſo; that intimation would kill him with deſpair. Let it appear to be advice entirely your own, ſuggeſted by the reports that begin to circulate in whiſpers. Conceal from him my father's intention of marrying me; were he to know it, his love, I fear, would betray him to ſome fatal exceſs. You may add, that I will never forget him; that I will retain for him all allowable ſentiments; that I conjure him by our paſt friendſhip to arm himſelf with fortitude on this occaſion; and that his endeavours to

ſecure

ſecure his own tranquillity will reſtore mine. If, ſometime hence, his ſeeing me will not be attended with too much difficulty, we will have an interview. Alas! my heart, will not thoſe precious ſtolen moments be diſtreſſing to both?—Perhaps one day we may be happier; but, he muſt not depend upon any thing; and all that remains for us, is to prevent the gathering ſtorm by a ſeaſonable, though painful, ſeparation. Heavens! what a ſacrifice! dreadful, indeed, and, I fear, beyond my reſolution. To renounce the deareſt idea of my ſoul! To doom myſelf to an everlaſting oblivion of the object I love! To breathe far from him, whoſe image will follow me to the tomb!—I open my mind to you without reſerve; you ſee my wounds; are they not mortal? Can there be a cure? Plunged in deſpair, I wait for death, as the only remedy for my ſufferings. I pity

the

the partner of my woes; what will become of him? Would to God! that you may relieve him, that your piety may encourage him to ſuſtain the misfortunes which are the lot of virtue. Indeed the thought of what he muſt endure is too much for me, and I expect from you, Sir, the aſſiſtance which I ſo much need. His removal is indiſpenſable for my peace; yet, were he to flee to the end of the earth, my heart and ſoul would go with him. But the die is caſt, and I muſt ſubmit. When hopes of ſeeing him are denied me, I ſhall be better able to combat my paſſion for him: if, indeed, the image of the dear tyrant will then leave me to repoſe.

LETTER XIX.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

MY father is juſt arrived; trouble and deſolation in his train. He talks of marrying me: and yeſterday ordered me to be called, that I might be acquainted with his pleaſure. On announcing his intention, I told him, with a dejected countenance, that his will ſhould determine mine. He fancied there was ſome heſitation in my anſwer, and aſked me what objections I had to propoſe. I looked at my mother, who took up the diſcourſe, and ſaid, it would be proper to wait a little before that reſolution was adopted; that I was very young; that I ought to be acquainted with the perſon intended for me; yet, that ſhe made theſe remarks in perfect acquieſcence

eſcence with their being ſlighted or regarded. I flatter myſelf, replied my father, that Tereſa is diſpoſed to obey me; and that ſhe can truſt me for the choice of a huſband. You may depend that I will not force her inclination; but, ſuppoſing that her heart is as free as it ought to be, ſurely I may be allowed to guide it in the moſt important ſtep to be taken in life? I ſaid, with a ſigh, if I may venture to anſwer you, Sir, I feel no wiſh to be married; my utmoſt happineſs would be ſtill to live with you. Were your mother and I immortal, he replied gravely, I ſhould approve of your ſentiments; but, as we, like you, have been young, ſo now we grow old; and the time will come when we muſt rejoin our anceſtors. How dreadful it is, for a girl to be left alone in the world! Think well

of that, Miſs. I would wiſh to believe that your regard for us has dictated your ſpeech, and that no foreign partiality has given birth to your refuſal. However, I ſhall allow you time to make up your mind on this ſubject; ſix months, if you pleaſe—but, that period elapſed, give me a final anſwer; that will regulate my opinion. Far be it from me to enter into a diſpute with you, when your happineſs is depending! But my age and experience have furniſhed me with a degree of penetration, which cannot be expected from you. I muſt be better acquainted than any other perſon with what ſuits you; and, after mature reflection on the match I propoſe, it appears to me moſt adviſable, and every way likely to promote your happineſs. Yet, as you are undecided, I will preſs the ſubject no farther at preſent; though if you

continue

continue to thwart me with chimerical objections, tremble for the future. We cannot always be with you; it is the decree of fate that a ſeparation muſt, ere long, take place between us, when we ſhall enter our everlaſting manſion. O Sir, (I cried, elevating my hands) what a terrible picture you delineate! Why do you mention the day when I muſt leave you?—Daughter, ſuch is the law of nature; therefore, obey your father, who can only wiſh your good. See, your affectionate mother is diſſolved in tears; her judgement correſponds with mine. Have you any private reaſons to oppoſe my choice? Come, confide them to my paternal boſom!—So ſaying, he drew me toward him, and took me in his arms. Ah! Conſtantia, what was then the ſituation of your poor friend! My heart flew to my lips; I was on the point of ſpeaking,

but a groan prevented me. I bathed the face of my father with a torrent of tears. O eloquent voice of nature! O inexpreſſible charm of filial affection! What ſhame I felt for the ſtruggle of contending paſſions! My mama, who witneſſed the ſcene, threw her arms round her huſband's neck, and we mingled the ſtream of tenderneſs. My beſt friend, ſaid ſhe, after a moment's ſilence, I think Tereſa ought to be conſulted on the preſent occaſion. The fatal conſequences of too many marriages proceed entirely from the want of ſympathy between thoſe who are united. It is commonly thought that when rank and fortune are ſuitable, every inconvenience is baniſhed; but this is a miſtake. At the ſame time that the pair are guarded againſt the neceſſities of life, care ſhould be taken to ſecure them, likewiſe, againſt evils equally intolerable,

tempers

tempers never meant to associate, disgust, and too often aversion. Happiness does not consist in a mass of riches; mediocrity will suit my daughter better, nd she will always have it in her power to enjoy that. The support of her name she may leave to her brother, who has already shewn himself not unworthy of his noble ancestors, and who will take care to preserve the honour of his family. Let, therefore, the days of my dear Teresa serenely slide away in the shades of private life. Then, taking my hand, which I held up to my eyes, no more! said she, away with these tears; embrace your father, and compose yourself; we will talk on this subject another time. Madam, said Mr. de Saint Cyran, my daughter will think of it, it is her business. For my part, my plan is laid, and I will not alter it. So saying, he arose

haſtily from his chair, without permitting me to embrace him, and went out. My mama followed him, and I returned to my chamber, ſufficiently diſpirited, as you may imagine. To complete my misfortunes, Faldoni came to pay us a viſit in the afternoon. It was remarked that my eyes appeared heavy; for, the truth is, I had wept plentifully. Faldoni ſeemed uneaſy; his face frequently changed colour; and, my father, who does not like him, looked ſtedfaſtly at him. I never ſaw ſuch piercing eyes; as I met their glances, they often made me tremble. What a wretched conſtraint, my dear friend! How painful to be always on one's guard! When the heart is ſo much agitated, muſt not ſome emotion be betrayed by the countenance? I fancied a hundred times that our diſguiſe was ſeen through by

my

my father. His cloudy looks were darted at us from the gloomy ſhade of his eyebrows, in a manner quite tremendous. I ſuffered all the tortures of the rack. Is it credible that I ſhould be diſtreſſed by the preſence of him I love, and delighted at his removal? However, this was the caſe. I have been left at peace ſince then; the fatal converſation has not been renewed; yet, I am not the leſs concerned on that account. Ah! Conſtantia, my bliſsful days are at an end. I muſt bid adieu to happineſs, to love, to hope, to all the ſweetneſs of life. I muſt part with every thing.

P. S. I took a falſe alarm; my father ſuſpects nothing; his ill-humour was the conſequence of our diſcourſe in the morning; this I learn from my mother. The ſelf-

arraignment of a guilty heart! that fancies all eyes intent on it, and apprehends condemnation from every quarter.

LETTER XX.

THE CURATE TO TERESA.

HOW affected am I with your confeſſions! To triumph over ourſelves by the exertions of fortitude, and renounce the ſweeteſt error of the heart, claims the palm of virtue. Shall I ſpeak ingenuouſly? I have long ſuſpected the ſecret which you have confided to me; but, the ſtability of your principles was too well known, for me to entertain the leaſt doubt of your prudence. I was well perſuaded that my dear daughter would not venture to take a ſtep without the approbation of the ſtricteſt honour. Courage! therefore; for I perceive nothing but a misfortune too frequently inevitable, and againſt which, reaſon itſelf is ill-

provided with arms. Perhaps you are ſurpriſed at this language from an old man and a prieſt, whoſe years and office ſet him above the tyranny of the paſſions; but I am a ſtranger to that affected ſanctity, which, with a ſavage ſternneſs repulſes the ingenuous overflowing of a too ſenſible and timorous heart. I am a man, with all the infirmities of my nature. I have experienced the dreadful effects of thoſe inward tempeſts which dethrone our reaſon, and ſet at naught the boaſted precepts of philoſophy. I have ſeen that the ſcaffolding of morality, ſuppoſed a ſhelter from the aſſaults of natural emotions, is ſhattered by the leaſt blaſt; and that we are deſtroyed by the arms provided for our defence. I have endured the fever which torments you (for I will make my confeſſions alſo, and repay your confidence with mine) and, perhaps, am indebted to the infirmities

of

of age for the little virtue that I retain. How can we know ourſelves, if we have never engaged the enemy? The ſoul is purified by trials. Without this alarming ſhock, would you have gueſſed your own ſtrength? That has manifeſted it; that has proved we are capable, by the aſſiſtance of reaſon and reſolution, of the ſublimeſt efforts. Dear child, what tears has your letter drawn from my eyes! How have I ſympathiſed with you in your ſufferings! At your entrance into the world, ſurrounded with the moſt flattering hopes, in the bloom of beauty, to be ſeized by the violent hand of affliction, and thrown at diſtance from the flowery path that nature ſeems to have allotted for youth to rove in! To have the glooms of grief and diſtreſs extended before you! To walk between two precipices, without a guide to conduct you, without a cheering ray to

enlighten you! What muſt have become of you, had not the Supreme Being, whoſe watchful eye pervades all nature, declared himſelf your protector? Thanks be to that good God! things are not yet deſperate. Do not give yourſelf up for loſt; Providence, from the depth of woe often calls up conſolation. Why ſhould you, then, renounce that happineſs which it is probable attends you? Time brings ſurpriſing viciſſitudes; nature is never at a ſtay. Survey the rapid ſucceſſion of different events, which has devolved with the tide of time. It is the picture of man; the condition of his nature is, never to continue the ſame. Every object changes; every ſituation is altered; to-day, things go ill; to-morrow, they mend; in the triumph of fortune a reverſe is to be apprehended; as, in pain, it is natural to hope for pleaſure. This way of reaſoning has been my conſtant

ſtant ſupport through life. When I have been unhappy, I have ſaid to my ſoul, ſuffer with reſignation, things are at the worſt; if they alter, it muſt be for the better. Proſperity has, at length, revived me with her ſmiles, and obliterated the memory of paſt ſufferings.

I reſume now, dear daughter, the ſubject of your letter. As ſoon as it was delivered to me, I went to look for your friend; I invited him, by a note, to call on me; and he came two hours afterward. I talked to him a great while about indifferent things, and ſlipped out ſome words relative to the entertainment on Saturday, our walks, and our converſations. I obſerved he changed colour, and ſighed; he caſt his eyes toward the ground, and continued a long time without uttering a ſyllable. Then, ſuddenly recovering himſelf, What's

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the matter, Sir? ſaid he; what would you inform me of? Do not keep me in ſuſpenſe. I will not, ſaid I, with an air of ſerioufneſs; and it is for that reaſon I deſire your attention. You muſt have ſeen my friendſhip for the family of the Count de Saint Cyran, and eſpecially for his daughter, whom I have known from her birth; whom I have carefully educated; and, who honours me with her eſteem. Zealous as I am for the welfare of the young lady, you may well ſuppoſe me uneaſy on account of the reports ſpread, reſpecting your marked attentions to her. I have, therefore, thought proper to give you this warning, and to adviſe you to moderate them. It ſeemed to me that this language might ſound leſs ſevere from my mouth, than from that of a father, jealous of the reputation of his daughter, and incapable of forgiving the leaſt attempt to ſully

it.

it. I am farther authorized to open this explanation, by my office as a minister of peace and reconcilement; by the absolute confidence reposed in me by that family; and I may venture to add, by the interest I take in your happiness. Tell me, Sir, whether I offend you by this frankness? I fear, indeed, that it mortifies you; but it is a necessary severity, which I am sure your good sense will forgive.

I thank you, said he, both for the interest you take in my welfare, and for your sparing the father the trouble of this explanation; though, for my part, I fear an explanation with no man. You have not offended me; I honour your office and you; and, if you have mortified me, it is not in the sense you meant. But, who told you, Sir, that I had shewn marked attentions to Miss de Saint Cyran?

Are cuſtomary civilities, attentions; and, do you charge me with them as a crime? Cannot one diſtinguiſh a lady, without being ſmitten with her? Or, is paying her the homage due to her merit, in the face of the world, wounding her reputation? But, it is granted that the public is ill-diſpoſed, ſuſpicious, and curious; it preſumes to penetrate halfway, and gueſſes the reſt; the more exalted the virtue of the object which employs its ſpeculation, the greater is the triumph of envy in wounding it with calumny.——Heavens! abſence itſelf cannot ſecure us; your enemies, and every body has ſome, will miſconſtrue your ſilence, and aſſert that your removal proves your guilt. But, who are they that complain?——It is of ſmall conſequence to know them, I anſwered; lay your hand on your heart, and ſay, have they not ſpoken the truth?

I am not now before my judge, anſwered he; I acknowledge no tribunal but that of honour, and that tribunal is ſeated here; (ſtriking his boſom) while I am not condemned by that, mankind has nothing to reproach me with, nor have I an apology to make to them.

I replied with a degree of warmth, Did you know my heart, you would be leſs irritable. My deſign is not to pain, but to ſerve you; nay, to ſerve you againſt your own conſent. You are ruſhing to deſtruction; you cannot long continue as you are. Your heart betrays itſelf every moment; it expoſes both you, and the object of its affection. Miſs de St. Cyran is ſo univerſally eſteemed and reſpected, that what is ſaid at preſent about her, circulates in whiſpers; but common fame is not long to be bribed to moderation. In ſhort, if

you

you take my advice, you will forbear your visits, and prudently withdraw yourself for a season.

At these words he seemed struck with terror. Withdraw myself! See her no more! What do you say? Good God! Then recovering himself, and appearing ashamed of being surprised off his guard, he said, with affected serenity, since you are honoured with the confidence of Miss de St. Cyran, I suppose, Sir, you are to be considered as her ambassador, and doubtless it is by the lady's order that you have declared her will in this cruel sentence. Well! I will obey it. Yes, Sir, since it must be so, I will no more approach a house where, I must confess, some moments of pleasure have been my share — dearly enough purchased! (striking his forehead with his hand) Dire necessity! —— Forgive this transport!

tranſport! I forgot that I was in your preſence (wiping the tears that flowed from his eyes). He then attempted to go out, but I withheld him. Unhappy man! Whither do you flee! Stay here, and receive from me all the conſolation in my power. I am not hard-hearted, but feel an affection for one who has warmly intereſted me in his behalf. I would fain procure your happineſs; I would fain do it; but, alas! what obſtacles! Yet, take courage; compoſe yourſelf; but, by no means appear before the beloved object; it is eſſentially neceſſary that you avoid her. You muſt.

I was going to add much more; but, my daughter, he gave a ſhriek, and fell at my feet. On recovering, he flew to my arms.—Ah! my father! my dear father! Is it you who ſpeak to me? Can it be ſo? May I hope?

hope?——But, what have I dared to confeſs to you? —— Indiſcreet! I have betrayed myſelf! —— Fear nothing! I anſwered; your ſecret is ſacred; pay me another viſit, and I will conſider what you muſt do. I know your ſoul is honeſt. Had you been a ſeducer, our intercourſe would have ceaſed. But, your ſentiments are virtuous, and you deſerve to be happy. I embraced him with tears, and we parted.

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LETTER XXI.

FALDONI TO THE CURATE.

I HAVE juſt been to ſee Miſs St. Cyran, who appeared penſive and melancholy. On my attempt to enter into converſation with her, ſhe withdrew; and did not condeſcend to bleſs me with one glance. I now call to mind ſeveral circumſtances that fell out previous to this viſit, and which might have given me a foreſight of my reception. What is the grievance, Sir? What have I done? How am I criminal? I will not attempt to deſcribe the effect I ſuſtained from her coldneſs; with indignation and deſpair of heart I ruſhed from the preſence of the fair one. Alas! I may be in the wrong; but,

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it is not allowed me to make a defence! Yet, the more I reflect, I am convinced that I ought to have my ſentence confirmed beyond a doubt, before I acquieſce in it. Dear Sir, have the goodneſs to perſuade her to grant me an explanation. Are criminals puniſhed without being informed of their offence?——This is a favour I expect from you, as the Miniſter of the God of Love; it is by clemency that you imitate the Divine nature. Indeed I bluſh when I picture to myſelf a venerable paſtor, who, aſſailed by the complaints of a frantic youth, bears with the infirmity of an earthly paſſion, condeſcends to liſten to his amorous diſtreſs, and ſacrifices in his behalf thoſe precious moments, which certainly would be employed to infinitely more advantage in the diſcharge of the rigid duties enjoined

by

by the holy voice of Heaven-breathing religion. Yet, why ſhould you deny me aſſiſtance? Are you not the phyſician of ſouls? Your eloquence pours the balm of comfort into the hearts of the wretched; you ſnatch from deſpair all who have the happineſs to hear the ſoul-tranſporting accents of your tongue. I know it is ſaid, exceſſive lenity is a vice. So let it be, with thoſe cold and rigid mortals whoſe laws are all engraven on braſs, and who never ſtep an inch beyond the narrow limits of their principles. With them, pity is a weakneſs; and ſeverity aſſumes the title of juſtice. Woe! to the follower of virtue, who fancies ſhe is fully pleaſed with him who barely acquits himſelf of his own local duties! Virtue, ſublime name! is ſhe not ſuperior to all human compacts, and the petty laws of ſociety? Before the world, ſhe was;

before

before virtuous men exiſted, ſhe repoſed on the boſom of her heavenly Parent; her emanations deſcend from heaven to earth; he who ſincerely worſhips her, does not wait for the law to tell him, you muſt do ſo; at the ſight of virtue, he flies to meet her; he embraces her, ere the legiſlator has ſpoken. O you who have a ſoul, receive me to your paternal boſom; let me there depoſit the burden of my afflictions! Yet, how will your generous nature ſuſtain it? I ſink under the weight. Nor ſtrength, nor fortitude, nor faculties remain; all is annihilated.

I will endeavour to ſee you ſome time to-day. I have been continually walking ſince the morning; as if fatigue were likely to relieve me from the diſagreeable thoughts that diſtract my imagination! Alas!

to run, to fly, is a vain ſtratagem; go where I will, this heart, this poor ſickly heart, will be my companion!

LETTER XXII.

THE CURATE TO FALDONI.

COME this evening; I will wait at home for you. We will take a walk together in the woods; rural air is balſamic to a wounded mind. You are dexterous at aggravating your misfortunes; and the tyranny of fancy precipitates you with wonderful zeal into a ſea of difficulties. What! becauſe reaſon dictates the propriety of a ſhort abſence, all is loſt, and the very glimmerings of hope expire! Your brain is diſordered; your blood inflamed; chimeras haunt your diſtracted imagination, and you are incurably wretched. What would become of you, were theſe evils real; were you obliged to renounce the object of your deſires;

were you condemned to forego even seeing her again? Your letter to me has the air of coming from a child, who knows not what it asks for. You desire that Miss de St. Cyran should confirm, with her mouth, your sentence, as you are pleased to call it. What I told you is quite lost; and it seems that your memory has not escaped the shipwreck of your reason. Wherefore do you complain? Who pretends to say that you are in the wrong! What! to recommend reserve, prudence and management, is to call you criminal? You say that you have not been favoured with a glance from your charmer. From discreet caution she has preserved a rigorous constraint in your presence; and you are seized with madness! You are forward to condemn her. Lovers are an odd sort of people! Was it merely to distress you, that, in the tone of friendship, I solicited your

absence?

Have you entertained ſuch a ſuſpicion? Dare to avow it, and I will never ſee you more. How could I take a cruel pleaſure in tormenting you, when, forſaking the gravity of my character and function, I have even confeſſed a tender ſympathy with you in your amorous weakneſſes? You have put a very wrong conſtruction on the purport of a prayer, which, having no object but that which is ingenuouſly expreſſed, will not be repeated by Miſs de St. Cyran, if you deſpiſe it. She leaves it to the integrity of your heart, to determine on a removal, which, to me, appears indiſpenſable, but which by no means implies your diſgrace.

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LETTER XXIII.

The Curate to Teresa.

YOUR friend, by appointment, called on me yeterday at five o'clock. We walked out immediately, taking the way to the fields. It was a delightful evening; and, as we proceeded leisurely in deep silence, chance led us to a steep hill, from whence part of the town lay in open prospect. Here we were allured to make a pause, enamoured with the beauties of the scene. The Soane flowed beneath us through a majestic plain, and visited with its streams the elegant chain of buildings on which the eye dwells with an enchanting pleasure. I have often had occasion to observe, my dear daughter, that the charms of nature com-

municate a secret calm to the soul, and compose the stormy voice of the passions. Mr. Faldoni stood motionless, gazing with fixed attention on that quarter of the town which remotely presented itself to his view; and fancying that he could perceive the appearance of your house, he wept at the discovery. To-morrow, said he to me, at this hour, I shall be far enough from that! He arose, and continued, Let us leave this spot, the prospect is too distressing for me; my resolution gives way. We removed a few steps, when he suddenly turned about, and pointing toward the fatal building, O God! he cried, grant me strength to tear myself from that dangerous neighbourhood! But, why must I flee? Too cruel man, why do you oblige me to withdraw? He then sat down on the grass. Yes, 'tis resolved, I will not forsake

forſake this ground; here let me die! (ſaid he, his voice rendered hardly intelligible by riſing ſobs) yes, let me be interred beneath the ſhade of this tree; and ſhould ſhe viſit the ſpot, let her know that I fell a victim to her cruelty. I ſuffered him to indulge his melancholy effuſions a good while without interruption; and when his heart ſeemed ſomething lighter for having depoſited its burden, I began to remind him of what I had ſaid before in converſation, and writing. I pointed out the hopes of better days; encouraging him to endure his preſent ſufferings by every motive of honour, reaſon, and love. I brought him to confeſs that his complaints were unjuſt; that nothing was propoſed but very warrantable precaution; and, that it was abſurd not to ſubmit to neceſſity. He liſtened to me, with his arms

croſs-wiſe and his head inclining to his boſom, in a melancholy attitude. Well! ſaid he at laſt, you command, and I obey; I promiſe not to enter the town again till I am permitted to return. Adieu! Sir, (folding me in his arms, with profound ſighs) adieu! my benefactor and my friend! Remember me! Suffer me to write to you, and deign to favour me with an anſwer; deign ſometimes to mention to Faldoni, her for whom he does more than lay down his life. I know not whither to go; having no object to purſue in this diſmal journey, all places are to me the ſame. What days of bitterneſs muſt I endure! How different from thoſe when I enjoyed the ſatisfaction of ſeeing her; when I breathed the air of felicity in her preſence! You know not that, in reſigning Tereſa, I loſe an angel. He repeated with peculiar emphaſis, ſhe is

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an angel deſcended to earth to bleſs mankind. Adieu! Daughter of the Skies! thou whom I loved, though hopeleſs; whom I ſtill love, though loſt; and whom I will love to the laſt pulſe of my life. Should my complaints reach you, allow me but a tear, and I die contented!—You will ſee her, Sir; tell the charming maid, that I will never ceaſe to adore her. My condition is open to you; you are witneſs to my anguiſh; I do not conceal it from you; Heaven and earth knows it; I may groan, at leaſt, that is a comfort which cannot be denied me, though I am deprived of every other.——Yes, of every other! Have I even an aſylum remaining? Am I not driven from it? What could be done worſe, were I the object of her hatred?

When I found him relapſing into

his firſt apprehenſions, and diſpoſed to reject my counſels, I aſſumed a different tone. I thought, ſaid I to him, that I had to do with a man of ſenſe! But, ſince nothing can moderate your wild and impetuous humour, you muſt be left to the conſequence. I proteſt to you, therefore, that I will no longer concern myſelf with your affairs, and that I ſpeak to you now for the laſt time. I then feigned to leave him; but he ſtopped in a tremor. What would you do? Do your not perceive that I am a wretch whoſe ſufferings have dethroned his reaſon? Is a patient forſaken, becauſe he has the misfortune to labour under a delirium? In pity, do not abandon me! I am ready to ſubmit to any thing. You inſiſt on my retiring; well, once more, adieu! He again flew inſtinctively to my arms. Then

ſuddenly

suddenly bursting from them, Write to me, I beseech you! That is your road, and this is mine; here we part. He descended the hill precipitately, till I lost sight of him.

LETTER XXIV.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

I HAVE obliged him to remove from me; he is now far enough off, and has left me to my tears. Ah! my friend, where is he now, who filled the vacuity of my moments, who was the charming engroſſer of my thoughts? He was every thing to me; more than life, ſomething more than happineſs itſelf. The ſight of him inſpired me with heavenly rapture; everlaſting tranſports dwelt on his ſmile. —— But, he is gone! — Though deeply fixed in my wounded heart his image ſtill remains. There it remains for my puniſhment, and never will leave me at reſt, till I meet the great deliverer, death! I deſpair of ſerenity

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this ſide the grave! My imagination fondly reveſted in joys, in felicities, in loves. Poor Tereſa! weak, miſtaken girl! you did not know, you did not perceive, that you muſt derive all thoſe bleſſings from Faldoni alone. When I recollect the emotion that ſeized me at his appearance; my concern at the bare expectation of his coming back; the palpitation of my heart at the ſound of his ſteps, at the tone of his voice, at every thing, in ſhort, which gave notice of his approach; I wonder how I could reſolve to baniſh him; how I could think of living a moment without the ſight of him. —— Ah! Conſtantia, why did you induce me to read the letters of Julia Mandeville? Why ſadden with the gloom of an imaginary wretch, a ſoul already bleeding with its private anguiſh? Yes, I have read the book; I have bathed its pages with

tears

tears that flowed from the full fountain of my heart. Alas! Julia had her conſolations; I have none. She loved without reſtraint; while I am obliged to conceal my paſſion from every thing in nature. I muſt ſmile, when I need to weep; I muſt lie ſilent, while my heart is breaking.—Gracious God! to feel one's ſelf dying, and not dare to ſay, I die!

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LETTER XXV.

TO THE SAME.

MY father has presented to me the man whom he intends for my husband; death from his hand would have been more welcome. Before this, antipathy was a word not understood by me; I thank this strange personage for giving me an idea of it. Imagine, my dear Constantia, you see a tall withered spectre, of a dark, jaundiced complexion, who addressed me with a tone of importance in sepulchral accents, examined me with his hollow, vicious eyes, and smiled horridly, stretching his mouth to his ears. Such was the figure that I discovered at the first glance. You will ask me whether he possesses merit, wit, and manners. I answer you, that

that he has two million. He has juſt returned from the Indies, having amaſſed that prodigious fortune in thoſe climates. Would to God! he might go back again! I underſtand that he abandoned his parents here to poverty; and this has rendered the diſagreeable creature my abhorrence. I was provoked at him for looking down on me as his conqueſt, and in conſequence, daring to take my hand and kiſs it: I withdrew it in haſte; and my colour muſt have ſhewn him my averſion. He is going on a journey, for ſix months. Six months, dear couſin, is the term fixed for poor Tereſa's marriage! Was it, then, for the ſake of this fatal union that I baniſhed my Faldoni, and deprived myſelf of the ſatisfaction of ſeeing him? Alas! he went away penſively, without friend, without guide, without comfort, forlorn, alone, on foot, in the gloom

of the evening; and, while he traverſed deſerts in obedience to me, I watered my couch with tears; I regretted him; I called on him; I curſed my ſeverity — ſeverity, do I ſay? cruelty, tyranny. Dear Conſtantia, how painful are my efforts! to affect the froſt of indifference! to ſuppreſs the whiſper of a ſigh! to deny my eyes the pleaſure of looking at him! —— Yes, let pride be condemned by the voice of mankind! They are right; pride is the tyrant of nature. I would retreat to a cottage, and conceal myſelf beneath the humble veil of poverty, to eſcape from the perſecutions that ſurround me. My father has threatened to confine me within the walls of a nunnery, which would moſt certainly afford me the only ſuitable aſylum. In reality, ſhould I give the preference to an unequal union? I know not whether my ideas are

juſt;

juſt; but muſt own that thoſe I entertain of the marriage ſtate, are moſt ſublime. I conſider it as the ſupreme degree of human felicity, founded on virtue, eſteem, and tenderneſs. Without theſe qualifications no condition appears more dreadful to me, than that of being condemned to live with a man one deſpiſes, or whom one cannot love. On the contrary, in the ſingle ſtate, or under the ſanction of a religious life, the laws that bind us are of our own chuſing; when our daily taſk of mortifications, or labours is performed, (and what condition is free from them?) we may live at peace with ourſelves, and recover in our own hearts the ſhadow of liberty, ſince the reality is no where. Theſe have often been my reflections, and I always renew them with delight. The preſent criſis of my affairs cannot poſſibly continue; there muſt be a revolution. Every

thing

thing is againſt me, men, opinions, and fortune; and I have only the integrity of my heart to ſhield me from ſo many enemies! What would you have me to do? I feel myſelf able to face them all: but, a father! Oh, my friend, what a terrible adverſary! Let him but ſpeak, I am humbled to the duſt; I ſee that I am nothing. Heaven, earth, my lover, univerſal nature vaniſhes; and my refuge is obedience.

LET-

LETTER XXVI.

FALDONI TO THE CURATE.

IT is, then, certain that I have loſt her; that ſhe has driven me from her; that ſhe renounces me!——O divine ſentiment of never-dying affection, what is become of you? My viſionary happineſs is at an end; and nothing remains to me but a forlorn remembrance of it! How is ſhe engaged? Does ſhe feel, at leaſt, ſome compunction for the ſufferings I ſuſtain through her? Or am I entirely effaced from her mind? Alas! if ſhe be happy, what are my ſufferings? Yet, let her know what I write to you; paint to her my condition; at leaſt it deſerves her pity. How tediouſly I drag my dreary days! Surely it is ten years ſince I left you! My

eyes

eyes are inceſſantly turned toward the ſpot from which I am baniſhed; not the deſert can ſecure me from diſagreeable reflections. I ſee no being around me without a companion; but I am a forlorn individual! I ſtand alone in the univerſe! No one belongs to me; no one ſhares my fortunes; no one cares for my life; no one participates my hopes and fears! Were I immediately to quit this tranſitory ſcene, my grave would be cloſed without a tear. Dreadful dereliction! Inſupportable idea! It withers every bloom, and leaves a tremendous waſte behind it.

Yet, I could reſt contented with my habitation; were it in my power to be ſo with any thing. I feel that ſolitude is good for me; in the pure atmoſphere of theſe verdant fields, I breathe a ſalubrious air that ſoftens the impetuoſity of my blood. There is

a charming

a charming park in the neighbourhood; in which I take a turn every day. When I wish for a prospect of diversified nature, in the pleasing interchange of hill and plain, I ascend a neighbouring rock, where venerable oaks extend an asylum, and grateful zephyrs, sporting in the friendly shade, alleviate the blazing tyranny of noon. I frequently pay a visit to an abbey at a small distance, that rises from the bosom of four or five pleasant vallies. Bushes appear scattered here and there on the hillocks gilded with the blossom of broom; while the lowing of the cows at pasture in the neighbourhood, and the sound of the bell from the monastery, diffuse through the whole landscape, a softened air of religious melancholy. I hear from afar the artless strains of the peasants, who sing while they cut the herbs or roots for their evening banquet. Their soft plaintive

voices

voices thrill with an inexpreſſible charm to my very ſoul. The ſun behind the caſtle of Ormes, which appears full in ſight; and I feaſt on this delightful proſpect till night arrives with her ſhadowy train. Then I regain my cot; and the good people who have granted me an aſylum, welcome me home with an honeſt joy that wins the heart. I ſhare their frugal repaſt; amuſe myſelf with the picture of this virtuous family; the father, the wife, the children, are all the image of ſimplicity. How fond they are of each other! How merry when they return from the labours of the day! It is, then, certain that there are happy beings on earth. This thought affords me conſolation. Why do not mankind, therefore, embrace that happineſs which they may ſo eaſily obtain?—Juſtina, my landlady, was vexed yeſterday, and ſhe has given me this account of the occaſion.

caſion. Her god-daughter Jenny is beloved by Mathurin, whoſe father is a miſer. He will not conſent to his ſon's marriage with Jenny, becauſe ſhe is not rich enough; had ſhe but a couple of cows, their fortunes would be equal, and ſhe might depend on the hand of her lover. But theſe two cows are worth a great deal of money, and, ſays Juſtina, we cannot afford to give them to her; this renders the lovers unhappy; ſo that they ſpend their days in weeping. I promiſed to ſupply the two cows, when the honeſt folks almoſt ſtifled me with their careſſes. They have introduced me to the young couple, with whom I am really enchanted. What an afflicting contraſt between their ſituation and my own! Ah, Sir, ſince I have loſt the hope of being happy myſelf, I can taſte no bliſs but that of others. But are not you ſurpriſed at the

tyranny

tyranny of the baſe paſſions, which diſturb even thoſe poor villagers? That, in the midſt of fields where riches flow from the nervous arm of the huſbandman, where two wretches ſupport and comfort each other by ſharing their miſery, even through the rags of indigence, a ſyſtem of inequality pervades, offenſive to nature, that rouſes indignation, makes the blood boil in the veins, and tempts the ſoul to curſe that proud race of worms who think themſelves beings privileged beyond the reſt of their ſpecies, becauſe they are exalted a few inches higher. What! has not God formed them of the ſame clay as me? Will our aſhes be diſtinguiſhed in the bowels of the earth to which we muſt return; or will the worms that are to banquet on my body, reſpect theirs? How cruel are they who oppoſe the felicity of two lovers, which, at the beſt, muſt be ſo ſhort-

lived! What are twenty or thirty years to be ſpent in this world; and, why amaſs riches as if immortal? It is a ſhocking folly to be afraid that the earth ſhould fail us. It furniſhes the birds of Heaven with food, and yet they do not ſow! Venerable Providence! Supreme Being, whoſe ſceptre rules the ſpheres! It is a ſin againſt thy goodneſs inquiſitively and audaciouſly to anticipate the future. Doſt thou not load the trees with fruit, yet we dare to be ſolicitous! Yes, the more I reflect on civil life, the more ſenſible I am of nature's works being degraded by man's inſtitutions. Were ſociety well ordered, every individual would be in his place; and there would be hopes of my poſſeſſing her I love; the gift of her hand would be the reward of my affection; and, while I am writing, my tears would not bedew the paper. Would you, Sir,

who expreſs ſome intereſt in my welfare, would you, in that caſe, have baniſhed me from the ſpot that holds my life? Should I be a fugitive among woods and rocks; dragging the load of exiſtence in all the agony of fear; uncertain of my deſtiny; and at a loſs to know whether I am not to be deprived of my charmer? Fair idol of human wiſhes, Felicity, art thou always to be out of reach, though ever in view of thy votaries?

LETTER XXVII.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE juſt enjoyed a moment of happineſs! I am come from the caſtle of Ormes; what angel inſpired me with an inclination to go thither, I know not; but the moment that deſign entered my head, there ſeemed to be a curtain drawn from before me, and nature diſplayed in all her charms. What a beautiful day! I ſet out this morning before Aurora ſtreaked the ſkies; the path flew beneath my feet as I approached the towers of this bleſſed edifice, and they lengthened before me; I breathed with difficulty; and my eyes loſt the ſurrounding objects in a cloud. A ſhepherd, whom I ſaw leading his flock to a neighbouring meadow, very much

much intereſted me; every thing was enchanting, even the trees in the viſta, the rivulet that glides through the field, and every corner of the delightful land. In piercing the allies of lofty elms that lead to the caſtle, I fancied myſelf tranſported to the Elyſian ſhades; my eyes were employed in looking about me with inſatiable curioſity. When I came to the keeper's, his little reſidence charmed me; I was delighted with the windows overrun with ivy; the ruſtic turret raiſed before the door; that air of mirth and rural freedom which prevailed in his family: and, on my intimating a wiſh to ſee the inſide of the rooms, the good man readily offered to be my guide. Shall I deſcribe to you what were my ſenſations on viewing this ancient and venerable edifice, when I had croſſed the threſhold of the door? The deep ſolitude; the wind whiſtling through the aiſles and

galleries; the gloomineſs of the chambers, which for the moſt part had their ſhutters cloſe; that drearineſs which every where prevailed thrilled me with inexpreſſible horror. At the ſame inſtant I fancied Tereſa lay dead before me, and the forlorn pile ſeemed to be her ſepulchre. This idea ſo engroſſed my imagination, ſo cloſely haunted me, that I was obliged to walk out, that I might get the better of it. In the open air I recovered my reaſon, but on re-entering the chapel, the ſame fancy returned with redoubled energy, and an univerſal coldneſs ſhot through my veins. The good old man ſeeming to ſympathiſe with me, I re-collected my fortitude, and dragged my legs as well as I was able up the ſteps of the caſtle. My heart was in a flutter on reflecting that I was about to enter the cells of Madam de St. Cyran; though it had not been mentioned to me, I ſhould

have known it from the emotion felt within me at its ſight. I ſeemed to be entering a temple, and was ready to do it with the act of proſternation. What a delightful aſylum! Curtains of white ſilk, drawn up with roſe coloured ribbands, hung down in feſtoons about an elegant bed, incloſed in a kind of alcove; and on a ſmall table lay ſome books, ſuch as Clariſſa, Grandiſon, Racine, Deſhouliere, and the Engliſh Spectator. I found on her bureau an inkſtand, with ſome paper; a drawer was half open; a chair ſtood near, turned aſide, and looked as if Tereſa had juſt left it. Indeed ſhe ſeemed preſent to me; for the very furniture, in this diſorder appeared alive. The keeper gave me leave to take a turn or two in the park; this morning I began my ramble over it, and being alone, amuſed myſelf with engraving verſes from Petrarch, on the trees. Perhaps one day, when

ſhe viſits this wood, her eyes will diſcover theſe pathetic expreſſions of my love, and the memory of me will be revived in her boſom. How delighted was I with muſing along the canal bordered with jonquils and ſhaded with tufts of lilac; on the terrace from whence I viewed the whole circle of the horizon; and in the glades of ancient limetrees which at the end of the parterre, form a retreat impervious to the ſun! Tereſa muſt make this her favourite haunt; it breathes a certain calm, a ſerenity, a ſentiment of pleaſure, an inexpreſſible languor which I would call tenderneſs; and is too bewitching for me to forſake it. To-morrow I will take up my reſidence there, with books, a pencil, and paper; I will amuſe myſelf in reading, drawing, writing, walking; at noon I will dine with the keeper; and return to my hermitage in the evening.

How

How powerful, my friend, is the magic of the paſſions! They embelliſh every thing, where they reign. To the ſight of an enraptured lover, creation aſſumes a new face; he is conveyed to unknown ſhores, in other climates; the gardens and palace of Alcinous receive him in their beauteous boſom; he no longer ſees objects in the ſame light as the reſt of mankind; his feelings are exalted beyond thoſe of his ſpecies; he finds enchantment in a tree, a flower, or a rivulet. Alas! I pity his frozen ſoul who is a ſtranger to the generous glow of the paſſions: to him life has loſt its ſovereign charm.

LETTER XXVIII.

THE CURATE TO FALDONI.

YOUR abſence has already produced a good effect; inquiry has been made at Monſieur de St. Cyran's, I believe by himſelf, why you have diſcontinued your viſits? My anſwer was, that you were in the country; when Madam de St. Cyran, who takes every occaſion to praiſe you, ſpoke your encomiums ſo heartily, that ſhe quite charmed me. Go on, my friend; be always what you are at preſent; let neither modern manners nor the cuſtom of the world warp that integrity which is the baſis of virtue! Yet I muſt chide you for your viſit to the caſtle of Ormes, and the reſidence which you wiſh to make there. Does not prudence dictate

the

the choice of another habitation, and other receſſes to walk in? You cannot too carefully avoid every indiſcretion of that nature. I commend the ſtrictneſs of your moral ſentiments, and your opinion of the inequality of rank among mankind. But, my dear ſon, all theſe fine reaſonings will not correct the world; and the truths you utter will not perſuade any to deſcend from the ladder on which he is mounted. Though, in reality, I eſteem no more than you the people who are proud of the advantages they derive from birth and fortune, yet, I go with the ſtream, and bow my head to him whom chance has placed above me. Moraliſing may afford us conſolation; but to change the eſtabliſhed cuſtom of things is impoſſible! Enjoy the beauties of rural life; raiſe your ſoul to the ſupreme Being; think in peaceful ſolitude on the crowd of

wretches who languiſh in chains, or on a bed of agonizing ſickneſs; how many would envy your lot, and wiſh, like you, to have the privilege of beholding the glory of the riſing ſun; and yet you dare to murmur, who have only to look around you for ample occaſion of content! Where lie your pains? What is your diſtemper? What fetters confine you? You poſſeſs all the freedom, health, and riches that nature can beſtow; and above all, ability to enjoy them. But ſhocking prejudices impoſe their iron yoke on your neck; haughty mortals raiſe a wall of ſeparation between you and your miſtreſs! Well, my friend, this is an unhappineſs created by an inclination which would tyrannize beyond the bounds of reaſon. God forbid! that I ſhould ſay there is no hope of ſucceſs for your affection. I have given you my promiſe to diſpoſe the heart of a mother

in your favour; and time, accident, and your own behaviour may ſecond my efforts; but examine yourſelf, and tell me whether the extravagance of your wiſhes at this very inſtant is not the only ſource of your diſtreſs: when conſidering how far you are from having obtained your object, ought you not to be prepared for misfortunes, that they may not overſet you, ſhould they arrive? There is a certain ſoftneſs that attends melancholy reflections; for ſuſceptible hearts there is a ſecret charm in ſorrow; it is your duty, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, to render as comfortable as poſſible your bed of thorns. A Sibarite, reclined on roſes, dares complain. Why will you not adopt that way of thinking, which, let fortune ſmile or frown, will be moſt ſalutary? Under affliction, thank Heaven that it is ſo ſupportable; and

bear

heart in memory the bleſſings that preceded it. Would it not be ungrateful, after a fine day, to accuſe nature of cruelty becauſe the ſhades of night fall in ſucceſſion? We muſt not expect unclouded happineſs below. Would you have what is mortal become immortal; and momentary enjoyments exempt from the general viciſſitude of things? Look into futurity; think of that period, when in happier worlds, good ſhall be found without any alloy of evil. If love torments you; invite to your heart all the charms that may diſſipate its illuſion. Bind yourſelf, like Ulyſſes, to the maſts of your veſſel, that you may not be drawn aſide by the ſong of the Syren. Truſt me, happineſs is not an inmate of the paſſions; Short-lived are their pleaſures; but their agonies know no end. What floods of ſorrow do they occaſion! What

What victims do they ſacrifice! How many unfortunate mortals, at the foot of altars, in the gloom of cloiſters, all their lives lament with groans their having known the tyrants! It is ſaid, indeed, that they are the ſpring of happineſs, the arts and virtues, and that without their impulſe the wheels of a moral univerſe would never be ſet in motion. Ah! my dear Faldoni, beware how you adopt this ſoul-deſtroying ſyſtem! To feel, and to reſiſt, is the buſineſs of life. Love is not to be ſtifled; it is not to be torn from the heart; but it muſt be captivated, conſtrained, and ſubmitted to reaſon. True, this is a painful taſk; but, the reward is, that ſucceſs crowns our efforts. I mean to give you my opinion fully on this ſubject; ſo expect a long letter from me. You ſhall have the reſult of my obſervations through life; and,

perhaps,

perhaps, it may be my good fortune to convince you that happiness means no more than serenity of heart and absence of its tyrants, the passions.

LETTER XXIX.

TO THE SAME.

WHAT would you think of a quack, who ſhould ſay that the poiſons which infeſt the earth, are beſtowed on us by the bounty of nature, becauſe ſome of them are uſed in medicine; or, if he ſhould aſſert that mankind could not exiſt unleſs the chymiſt infuſed in their veins the venomous juices of the viper, becauſe they are converted to the purpoſes of an opiate? Yet thus it is that ſophiſts, in defence of the paſſions, by raſh logic draw from a few detached facts general conſequences. Nature, with a watchful eye to our happineſs, has given us that intimate ſentiment, that organ of the ſoul, which we call inſtinct, to animate us in

in the purſuit of pleaſure, and the ſhunning of pain. From this inclination and averſion proceed the primitive paſſions; but they are few, becauſe the Creator accompliſhes his ends by the ſhorteſt means. Man, abuſing his liberty, multiplies his wants, and ſwerves from the order of nature and the laws preſcribed to all ſenſible beings. He muſt learn to moderate or rectify the bias of his inſtinct that ſtrays in forbidden paths; the love of ſelf-preſervation muſt reſtore him to himſelf, and ſad experience of error muſt teach him to diſcriminate falſehood from truth, ſhew him how his intereſt is injured or promoted, recall to his mind the eternal verities of which he had loſt ſight by raſh innovation, and give him a clue through the labyrinth of his own wiſhes. This is the birth of reaſon, which properly implies the perfection of inſtinct. Why are

the

the rational powers of ſavages ſo limited? Becauſe, having few wants or durable affections, they have not many occaſions for the exerciſe and perfection of their inſtinct. There are paſſions for which they want words, becauſe language being but an expreſſion of the thoughts, the names of ſtrange paſſions can form no part of their vocabulary.

We poſſeſs two faculties, appointed by the author of nature to unfold inſtinct, imagination, and memory; the firſt receives and retains the impreſſion of objects; the other awakens the recollection of them; and when this impreſſion is very violent, it excites a lively ſentiment, which by continuance becomes a paſſion. To theſe cauſes may be added our proneneſs to imitation, the force of example, and the prevalence of habit. It

It has been juſtly remarked that the paſſions are contagious; you are affected while you liſten to the narrative of a man who relates his misfortunes; you ſympathiſe with his emotions; you feel the ſoftening influence of grief, and bear him company in his tears. What is the reaſon that in a theatre you are alternately moved by ſorrow and joy, with the confidence of hope and the anxiety of fear? What have you to do with the diſtreſſes of Phedra and Iphigenia? Why ſhould you be concerned for the ſon of Merope, and the huſband of Zenobia? You entered the playhouſe a ſtranger to care; what has happened ſince, to diſturb the ſerenity of your mind? Why do theſe ſtreams guſh from your eyes? Why does the burſting ſigh ſwell your boſom? Have you heard of the death of ſome beloved friend? No; you weep for the people who lived

two

two thouſand years ago, and you will carry home with you impreſſions deep enough to diſturb your ſlumbers, and harraſs your imagination with diſtreſſing dreams.

Habit, or that diſpoſition which ariſes from frequent repetition of the ſame acts, is nurſed by our inclination to embrace whatever is leaſt painful. Inſtinct conſtantly reverts to pleaſing objects, by which its action is facilitated; and it abandons itſelf to its bias, as the river rolls in the channel worn by its own tendency. When habit is determined by education, and ſtrengthened by example, it ſometimes alienates inſtinct, alters the temper, and deſtroys or weakens the original propenſities. This produces a conflict of jarring paſſions, a war of evils, an oppoſition of principles; a man naturally peaceful grows turbulent, reſtleſs, induſtrious

duſtrious to promote the intereſts of his avarice or ambition; and thus a glowing votary to pleaſure, ſacrifices its enjoyment for the ſake of honours and renown. In the midſt of this confuſion, let reaſon elevate her voice, let her ſay to the wretch on the rack of diſcord, You ought not to follow blindly either the prejudices of habit or education, nor your depoſed natural inclinations; I alone claim your obedience; how can you expect happineſs ſhould make her abode in a heart, torn by the tyranny of ſo many different maſters.

I admit that we owe to the paſſions ſome ſocial virtues; but, ſurely, a far greater number of vices? If heroes are their children, how much more does their family abound in highwaymen? If they embelliſh the faculties of ſome men, of how many more do they diſtract the underſtanding,

ſtanding, corrupt the heart, and ruin the conſtitution? When a ſhallow moraliſt extols the power of the paſſions and their wonderful effects, I eſteem him as an empiric who exalts the virtue of a fever, and the activity which it gives to the circulation of the blood.

Is any thing more oppoſite to the paſſions than reaſon; ſince the former continually drive us to extremes, and the latter keeps us in a juſt equilibrium? Who will deny that virtue is the object of that equality, from which reſults the harmony of the univerſe? Is it not a diſgrace to ſuppoſe that generous actions muſt be performed in the fit of a delirium? What then, to become virtuous, muſt we annihilate reaſon; and cannot one be a great man, without inſanity?

Virtue

Virtue is the love of order; whatſoever eſtranges the will from perfect agreement with the laws of order, is therefore eſſentially oppoſite to virtue. How can the paſſions which only act by violent ſtarts, irregular motions, arbitrary and various laws, preſerve the equilibrium of the ſenſes and reaſon, in the irreſolute fickleneſs of the ſoul?

Believe me, my friend, happineſs and virtue are found only with moderation; a ſoft voice, a gentle gale, fragrant odours, are delightful; but thundering ſtorms, dazzling luſtre, ſhrieking cries, and ſtrong ſcents wound our organs, and leave behind them diſagreeable impreſſions. Nature, by beſtowing on us a delicate organization, teaches us to avoid every thing which may diſarrange it; ſhe ſhews us, by the models of beauty placed before our eyes, that from the

the harmony, proportion, and unity of their parts, flows that inexpreſſible charm which wins our approbation. If ſhe has created paſſions, their courſe is bounded, and ſhe commands them to accompany the real wants of mankind. Hence, the ſavage clans who reſt in their original inſtitutions, are not ſuſceptible of durable emotions; their tranſient reſentment does not weave the dark and intricate plots which are contrived by our depraved hearts; and their love is only a phyſical ſentiment excited by the preſence of its object, and fugitive as the pleaſure with which it is gratified. In this ſtate, man may be happy, becauſe he acknowledges only the impulſe of nature; but when, ſubject to the capricious laws of our ſocial contract, inſtinct is loſt in the chaos of factious paſſions, he is perpetually croſſed in his motions, and fruſtrated of his deſigns. The ſoul becomes paſſive,

amid the crowd of contending inclinations; in the diſarrangement of the ſenſes, ſhe connects ideas of the greateſt diſparity; ſubſtitutes the phantoms of the imagination for real objects; makes uſe of reaſon itſelf to juſtify her errors; abuſes words, things, and fixed principles; and ſtops not, till wearied out and ſtupified, as it were, it is obliged from the tumult to ſeek repoſe. Nature, who impreſſed the ſtamp of thought on the forehead of man, there paints, in ſucceſſive ſcenery, all the internal emotions; the palpitations of fear, the convulſions of anger, the cares of ambition, the corroding pangs of envy, the agonies of love. Do theſe alarming ſymptoms announce felicity? Is the inhabitant at eaſe while his houſe is in a conflagration? I admire thoſe inveſtigators of the human heart, who are champions in behalf of the paſſions! They are awed by no difficulties;

difficulties; even avarice finds in them able panegyriſts!

For the idea of a happy mortal, let us fix our eyes on the wiſe man. We ſhall ſee him equally calm, whether triumphant or unfortunate; alike a ſtranger to unmanly fear and feveriſh expectation; enjoying, by a moderate exerciſe of his faculties, all the bleſſings of nature; rejecting nothing allowed him by reaſon; refraining, without violence, from what ſhe diſapproves; availing himſelf of the theory of the paſſions to regulate their uſe; ſacrificing his taſte to his principles; repreſſing the ſallies of his mind, if they have a tendency to bewilder it; appearing in ſociety the friend of mankind, ever ready to plead the cauſe of the abſent, to defend the rights of the weak, to bring forward modeſt merit; indifferent to all ſyſtems, having no object in view

but truth; never adopting an opinion without examination; never paſſing ſentence, without having weighed the merits of the cauſe; making his reflections the baſe of his conduct; and to avoid vain repentance, leaving nothing to chance which he can diſpoſe of by prudence. None can be more indulgent to his fellow-creatures, whom he ſerves without hopes of reward. Nay, he does more, he heaps obligations on the individual who ſtudies to injure him, and puniſhes his enemies with benefits. Hatred finds no admiſſion to his heart; it belongs only to weak ſouls, to children, and infirm age; it is a proof of impotence; and the breaſt that owns the influence of that tyrant, needs no other puniſhment. The ſavage cruſhes the inſect, and thinks no more of it; the philoſopher turns aſide, and ſuffers it to live. He knows neither the ambition of honours, nor the love of

gold.

gold. What are to him the ridiculous importance of rank, or the puerile vanity of title? Could he be angry, it would be with the blockhead who rates a man's worth by his parchments and dangling ribbands; but nothing can alter the even temper of his ſoul. The arrows of ſcorn bruſh over him without a wound; he walks beſide the arrogant without noticing him; he lives in the midſt of intrigue unmoved by the agitation of its vortex; he ſees courtiers ſcrambling around him for the gew-gaws of grandeur, while the favourites of preferment ſit on the top of fortune's wheel. He is amuſed with every thing, but nothing can give him pain. He meets with no rivals in his road, becauſe he aſpires at nothing; men every where are his friends, becauſe he has nothing to aſk at their hands. What ſhould he wiſh for? For wealth, or honours? He thinks

the journey, life, too ſhort to admit of thoſe cares; and he paſſes through ſociety like a pilgrim with his ſtaff, ready to depart. When he is tired of the world, he finds relief in ſolitude. There, ſurrounded by his books, he talks with the celebrated dead of every age. What converſation can equal that of Homer and Virgil? How inſignificant men appear to him, when he leaves the company of ſuch ſublime geniuſes! With what pity he hears the jeſts of witlings, the dull diſcourſe of folly, and the ſurfeiting confidence of ſelf-love! His acquaintance with the muſes renders him proof to the ſeductions of love; but he yields his heart to the charms of friendſhip; friendſhip, the balm of life to every honeſt heart, which time ſtrengthens, misfortune purifies, ſuperior to fate, and ſurvivor of the paſſions. For what do we not find conſolation in a friend?

Love

Love cools; pleaſure has its period; riches make to themſelves wings and flee away; reputation vaniſhes; as years advance, mankind retire from our company; we inſenſibly become ſtrangers in the world; ſociety feels not our loſs; youth and the graces, are objects of univerſal attraction; reduced to ourſelves, or rather our ruins, dreading ſolitude, oppreſſed with languor and melancholy, we ſeek for an aſylum from the tediouſneſs of age, and find it in friendſhip. We mingle our laſt tears with her ſympathetic ſtreams; and commit to her tenderneſs the care to ſcatter roſes on our tomb.

LETTER XXX.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

THE man —— What ſhall I call him? The protegé of my father has called to take leave of us. I was at my toilette when they announced him; and immediately wrapped my hands in the dreſſing cloth, to prevent an accident ſimilar to what happened on the firſt viſit. After making a ſtiff courteſy, I continued ſtanding, with my eyes fixed on my father all the time he was ſpeaking to him. He had the appearance of a man overloaded with wealth, while a gold-laced ſuit of clothes in a very bad taſte ſeemed to increaſe the aukwardneſs of his manner. He admired my flowing treſſes; and my father ſportively

tively wound them in a wreath round the neck of your Tereſa. The Indian was in an extaſy; and raiſing his two great terrific arms, drew near me. Fearing that he was going to twiſt them round me like a ſerpent, I cried out, and was ready to faint away. You never ſaw ſuch a figure of ſtupid ſurpriſe, as he ſtood before me. His mouth gaped, and the ſudden contraction of his nerves, if poſſible, caricatured his odious perſon. For my part, I felt the ſame ſhock as if I had trodden on a ſnake; and my blood boiled in a fever. He turned to my father, and aſked him, in a ſtammering tone, if he were ſo unlucky as to have excited my averſion? Monſieur de St. Cyran replied, in a ſtern voice, that a girl of family feels no ſentiments but thoſe which it is her duty to avow; and that his daughter muſt approve of a

match ſo honourable, when ſanctioned by her father's wiſhes to promote it. The wretch laughed with a provoking ſneer, which put me quite out of temper. I had the reſolution to anſwer, that I would obey my father in every thing that depended on my own will; but that I was not miſtreſs of my affections, and that I begged his pardon, if an invincible diſlike had betrayed itſelf in ſpite of my endeavours to conceal it. He darted an angry look at me; and, bidding me finiſh dreſſing myſelf, went away with his friend. About an hour afterward, my little ſiſter came running in a fright, and rapped at my door. As ſoon as Deſchamps opened it, ſhe ſought an aſylum between my knees. Siſter Tereſa, ſaid ſhe, feel how my heart beats! Heigh! Lolotte, ſaid I, what ails it? and endeavoured to comfort her with

an embrace. The poor child then dried up her tears, and began her relation. I had entered the great parlour to ſtudy a leſſon on the harpſichord; my governeſs left me for a minute, and I heard ſomebody talk in the adjoining cloſet. If curioſity has been ſaid to be my predominant fault, it was ſufficiently juſtified by the preſent occaſion. I drew ſoftly toward the door; peeped through the key-hole, and ſaw papa in earneſt converſation with mamma, ſtretching out his arm. (The chit imitated his action.) Yes, ſaid he, ſhe ſhall obey me, or own her error in a convent. You are too indulgent, Madam, ſhe will be ruined by your tenderneſs. To refuſe ſuch a huſband!— My dear mamma ſat next the bureau, apparently much diſpleaſed, and every now and then fetched a deep ſigh. (What a good mother! I

ſighed too, and Lolotte put me in mind of it.) She continued her narrative. Papa walked about, taking great ſtrides; and ſuddenly rang the bell. Do you want any thing? ſaid my dear mamma to him. —I wiſh them to bid her come down. —— What, during your preſent agitation? I conjure you not to do it till you are more compoſed. Indeed, Sir, ſuch ſcenes as theſe will kill me. A triffe will be ſufficient to cut the thread of my life, in its preſent declining condition. A ſervant appeared, who was ſent back, and a pauſe enſued in the converſation. Papa ſat down, with his arms croſſed, for a long while, ſeeming to ruminate on his ideas. At laſt he ſaid, ſhe ſhall inform me of the reaſons of this audacious oppoſition to my will. To talk to me in that manner! To put the worthy man to the bluſh whom I preſented to her!

her! She who hardly dared to breathe in my preſence! What can occaſion this inſolence! Has ſhe engaged in any intrigue unknown to us? Perhaps ſo. Girls of tender hearts fall into the arms of the firſt comer, and when the doors are ſhut, eſcape at the window. At this, my mamma raiſed her voice. You forget, Sir, that Tereſa is our daughter; why ſhould you cenſure her unjuſtly? I never ſaw any thing in her conduct to warrant ſuch a ſuſpicion. Oh! yes, ſaid papa, you are convinced that ſhe is perfectly right in diſobeying me! I have only to hope that Lolotte will eſcape the contagion of her example, and that I ſhall, at leaſt, preſerve one of my daughters. Ah! ſiſter, when my name was mentioned, I liſtened in a ſtate of palpitation like what you feel at preſent, and applied my ear to the keyhole with redoubled attention.

Lol-

Lolotte is a good child, ſaid mamma, and having only virtuous models before her, is in no danger of being ſpoiled. Papa ſhook his head; virtue, as much as you pleaſe! but the firſt is to obey a father; and if ſilly mothers did not countenance ſuch unnatural rebellion, there would be more harmony in families. My dear mamma fell a weeping at this; and I could not refrain. Oh! how angry I was with papa for being ſo naughty. What an inclination I felt to throw myſelf in the arms of that good mamma! But as they immediately came toward the door, I ran in a hurry to my harpſichord, and touched a few of the keys. Papa entering the room, cried, what does this brat do here? I neither dared to look at him, nor anſwer him, but continued playing. He articulated between his teeth the word ſpy, and bade me begone. I walked away, trembling; but he called me back,

back, and taking my hands in one of his, threatening me with the finger of the other; if you are refractory, said he, you shall see, you shall see the fate of disobedient daughters—and so he let me go. The tears started to my eyes, for he had almost broke my fingers with his squeeze; and look, sister, they are still red! At last, however, I escaped, and flew to tell you all. Do not you thank me for being so attentive? Don't cry, sister, if they oppress you, I will share your sorrows. Overcome with the friendship of this chit, I pressed her to my bosom, and gained her promise to give me an account of what she should hear in future. Cruel necessity! to have recourse to spies! But this is the consequence of unnatural severity in fathers. With what emotion I listened to the artless story of Lolotte! I dissolved in tears; and

the

the amiable child, while she talked to me, played with the ringlets of my hair. Happy age, the object of Teresa's envy.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

FALDONI TO THE CURATE.

MISS de St. Cyran was nurſed by my landlady. It would delight you to hear her talk of Tereſa; but how ſhall I do juſtice to what the good woman has told me? Methinks I ſee the charming maid approaching her mother after having recently offended her; I ſee Madam de St. Cyran withdraw the hand which Tereſa attempts to kiſs; the trembling daughter falls before her, embraces her knees, bathes them with her tears, and exclaims, O mamma, if I may not touch your hand, will you deny me to kiſs your feet? Do you not fancy that you too are a ſpectator of the relenting mother's forgiveneſs? Do you not ſee her raiſe the ſupplicating girl, and compoſe

compoſe her anguiſh with an embrace? What a picture! Can you refrain, Sir, from mingling your tears with mine, which ſtream while I attempt to delineate it! This pathetic, ſoul-ſubduing language flowed from the lips of a child but ſeven years old! Juſtina knows not how intereſted I am in her relations; but perceiving that they gain my attention, ſhe dedicates whole evenings in this way to my entertainment. And when ſhe happens to recollect ſome little ſtroke that had eſcaped her, we exult together like the diſcoverers of a new country. She has been at Lyons for ſome days, where ſhe will have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing her child; at my deſire the good creature took a baſket of flowers with her, which ſhe has promiſed to deliver to Tereſa, as a preſent from her huſband.

It

It rains here without intermiſſion; from every little walk I return wet. Surely never was ſo diſmal a ſpring! We crowd to the chimney corner as if it were winter. As ſoon as I get home, I order my landlady to make up a good fire, and taking a book, ſit fixed like a ſtatue by the ſide of it; but if I meet with a ſtriking ſentiment, my old wounds bleed afreſh, and the tears guſh in fountains from my eyes. What a ſick heart! What a weak head is mine! When will my ſufferings end? Muſt my days be lengthened in this melancholy career? My misfortunes affect my temper; I am grown haſty, peeviſh, and hard to pleaſe; and, what is worſe, ſeem diſtreſſed by the happineſs of others.

A few days ſince I was ſitting in the valley, reading the Eſſays of Montaigne for my amuſement; ſome children

children of the village came and ſported about me, without exciting my attention. But, a player on the cymbal appearing, the little company engaged him, for the pence they could collect together, to exert his ſkill for their diverſion. However the noiſe ſo diſturbed me in reading, and the inſtrument was ſo out of tune, that I could bear it no longer; but getting up in a pet, I put a ſmall piece of ſilver into the player's hand, and ſent him away. The poor children ſeemed thunderſtruck; and diſtreſs ſat on every countenance. I could not help blaming my conduct on reflection; this, ſaid I to myſelf, is the privilege of the wealthy, to diſturb at their pleaſure, the humble happineſs of the vulgar! What right had I to interrupt the innocent amuſement of theſe children? Were they not as free as I on their own ground; and

if

if their neighbourhood grew troublesome to me, was I not at liberty to remove elsewhere? Humbled by these considerations, I presented them with some money, to make them amends. This gave birth to another reflection in my mind; said I to myself, it is the impudence of wealth to think of repairing at the price of gold, the injustices it commits toward the poor. Indeed I saw too plainly that the young gentry were not satisfied; and, therefore, went in search of the cymbal player, whom I brought back, and then left the valley.

How can one distress these amiable creatures whose weakness and ingenuousness have such claims to our friendship? I never see a child without thinking of my first years; and feel a delicious satisfaction in tracing back those pure pleasures, that enchantment

chantment of unalloyed felicity which ſince I have never been able to find. Alas! where now are the charms of my ſchool-life, the longed-for holidays, and the rural walks with my ſchool-fellows? Theſe enjoyments vaniſh at a certain age. But, as we become greater children, are we more happy? That dry reaſoning which reduces all our pleaſures to rule; that art of life which only means the art of growing diſguſted; that knowledge of the world which ſerves no better purpoſe than to veil the treachery of the heart; and thoſe ſocieties in which vice appears in the habits of decency, have made me frequently regret my balls, my tops, and my holidays. I cannot even meet with a book belonging to my old claſſes, without a ſigh. How ſerene was I when a ſtudent of its pages! What rapture was my portion during the half hour's recreation that came

between my leſſons and my meal! What dejection did we feel when the ugly bell, interrupting our ſport, ſummoned us back to our forms! I cannot think without emotion of the houſe where I was brought up; and the places that recall the firſt pleaſures of my childhood, always ſtrike with a new impreſſion.

I have raiſed in my garden a bower exactly like that in which I ſat with you and Miſs de St. Cyran, at that feaſt which I ſhall never forget; to complete the imitation, a rivulet glides through it, and a bank invites to repoſe. There I ſpend luxurious hours, thinking of you, of her, of every thing which I have forſaken. When I ſee the ſmiling villagers, returning from their daily labours in the evening; the woodman loaded with branches; the ſhepherd leading home his flocks; the whole company returning

turning with ſongs, I am tempted to envy their felicity. They are ſtrangers to the fever of vain deſires; the melancholy anguiſh of love finds no place in their boſoms. I could ſometimes guide the ſhare with the ploughman, and turn up the glebe in furrows. As if labour could bring me relief! Fond effort! where can peace be found for a wounded mind? I am grown ſilent and ſad; a ſecret languor preys on my ſoul, and renders it painful for me to ſpeak. Averſe to, and even afraid of, company, I ſhun it, having long learned to derive all ſupport from myſelf. Yet, I am ſenſible that my retreat is an error. Man, detached from the ſpecies, grows ſullen and miſanthropic. The picture of human miſery which he draws in ſolitude, cannot be enlivened by the moving ſcenes of life. There he conſtantly feeds on his own bitter reflections; there love-

tyran-

tyrannises over a heart exposed to all its tempests; and rushes through the veins in torrents of fire. Ah! my friend, with what charms she pursues me through the shades of this wilderness! How entirely she possesses my heart! Her voice, her looks, her every motion, seize my imagination at the moment I am writing to you. Fair idol of my soul! At once my torment and my delight! Are you, then, no more to me? Must I never see you again? Spring appears impertinent; I sometimes wish that the fields were covered with snow, and that the river had overflowed the banks of its channel. The leaden course of time is insupportable! Alas! some find the hours glide serenely, they are wafted with satisfaction on the gentle stream; I would force them along with im-

petuosity; and am restless, till they stop short, to plunge me in the abyss for ever.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

TO THE SAME.

SEND me no more books my dear Mentor, I ſeldom read. What can men or their duſty volumes teach me, to whoſe eyes nature diſplays her own magnificent picture? Oh! were my ſoul diſengaged from its care, in my rural ſolitude, how pleaſed ſhould I be to trace the mazes of endleſs vegetation, the ſucceſſion of the ſeaſons and the courſes of the ſtars, whoſe charming influence frequently lead me aſtray in my nocturnal ſallies. Every morning I walk three or four miles; and find this bodily exerciſe neceſſary to diſſipate the ſolicitude of my mind. I have formed a friendſhip with a dog, to whom I gave ſhelter; we are always together; and

when I go out, he runs on before. I read, or muſe as I walk; go whither I pleaſe, and ſtop when I like; am neither a ſlave to ſervants, nor horſes; nor obliged to fix the hour of my departure, or of my arrival; neither am I condemned to dine or ſleep in a diſagreeable inn; and, if a landſcape ſtrikes me, my pencil is at hand to delineate it. Sometimes, on the top of a neighbouring mountain, I viſit a tree that ſhoots its branches in a picturesque ſtyle; or the ſhade of ſome willows that wave over the banks of a pond; or the ſhelter of a thick foreſt, the entrance of which forms at diſtance a gloomy arcade, while all the country around is a ſcene of dazzling brightneſs. How delightful thus to travel! I remember the tranſport I felt on my journey when firſt the roſes of Aurora ſtruck my ſight, emerging from the twilight, and ſtreaking the eaſt with their

their vivid hues; when the morning zephyrs ſported in my hair; and my feet bruſhed from the ſpires of the graſs the drops of glittering dew. With what extaſy did I behold the riſing king of day, darting his glory over hill and dale! The air and the exerciſe ſoon excited ſo hearty an appetite that I was obliged to ſtop and furniſh myſelf at the next village with a ſtock of bread and fruits; and, when I had fixed on a ſpot agreeable to my ruſtic ſenſuality, I ſat down to my repaſt. I uſually choſe the margin of ſome clear ſpring, a verdant meadow, and an humble cottage with the recommendation of a dairy. If I meet in my road an honeſt traveller whoſe features prejudice me in his favour, I introduce myſelf to his company, and we walk together till I feel an inclination again to be alone.

I ſat out early this morning, and having gained the caſtle of Ormes; I plunged into a valley, which as it opened before me, diſplayed an immenſe plain, enriched with a variegated rural landſcape; the Rhone proudly rolled his billows through it, and ſeemed to leave with regret the enchanting proſpect. I walked briſkly, and my ſpirits elevated by the delightful view, inſpired me with unuſual gaiety. I met an old man, returning from the foreſt, laden with wood; a tattered uniform, that half covered him, ſpoke his original profeſſion. An old ſoldier is my glory; his furrowed face has ſomething venerable and commanding. I accoſted the good man; and between people of ſimple characters like us, a connection is eaſily formed. He began talking of his eldeſt daughter, as the greateſt care of his life. It ſeems that ſhe was in love with a young

young peaſant who had the misfortune to be enrolled in the militia, and was killed ſoon after. The poor girl has ever ſince been inconſolable; her organs were too delicate to ſupport the ſhock; and ſhe has loſt her reaſon. The hope of affording her relief, gave me an inclination to ſee her; I deſired the old man to gratify it; and, taking up part of his burden to lighten the journey, we walked together to the cottage. At the bottom of the chamber I ſaw a young girl ſitting in an elbow-chair; the paleneſs of her viſage, the languiſhing wild look of her eyes, and the attention paid her, announced to me the wretched victim of love. I approached her with that reſpect bordering on fear, which I have always felt at the ſight of the unfortunate. My dear Agathe, ſaid her father, this gentleman comes to give you conſolation. She ſurveyed me

ſtedfaſtly, and, ſhaking her finger, made a ſign to me, that it was a vain undertaking. I could hardly reſtrain my tears; ſhe ſaw them ſtarting, and ſaid, Do you weep for my dear Alain? Ah! Sir, had you but known him! He was a young man ſo gentle, ſo humane! He is no more! And her grief burſt in torrents. Suddenly ſhe drew from her boſom a paper, which as ſhe preſſed to her lips, her groans redoubled; ſhe often preſented it to me. Poor! Poor Alain! ſhe exclaimed, ſee how he uſed to write to his Agathe! I read a letter, written in a natural and affecting ſtyle, where love was expreſſed with all the ſimplicity of nature. Don't keep it, ſhe cried, ſtretching out her hand to take it, it is all I have left of Alain, except his hat there! She cauſed the hat to be brought; held it to her heart; kiſſed it; talked to it. She then ſeemed to liſten, and made

 ſignal

ſignal of diſtreſs and diſappointment. At laſt ſhe turned to me, and ſaid, joining her hands in an agony, her face bathed with tears, when will he return? Every day I viſit the tree, under whoſe ſhade we parted. Ah! Sir, how often have I poured fountains from my eyes under that tree! It ſtands at the lower ſide of the houſe; and I never ſee it without feeling a thouſand agonies. But I will teach you a ſong that I lately made; and here ſhe began ſinging theſe words, in notes that might melt a heart of marble:

Adieu, my father, mother too,
For ever both I bid adieu!
Into the grave I ſhall deſcend,
And by my love my ſorrows end.

I could refrain no longer; the ſhower that had been gathering in my eyes, diſcharged itſelf; her mother embraced her, and every body ſighed.

Mamma, ſaid ſhe, I am in great pain; my head and my heart ache. Seeing her mother in tears, ſhe ſaid, compoſe yourſelf, dear mamma! No, I am not in pain; look at me, Sir, do you ſee me weep? At this, ſhe took my hand, and put it to her eyes; then riſing haſtily, I am going away; I ſee plainly that every body is unhappy on my account. No, dear child, we are all merry, ſaid her unfortunate mother; and taking her other daughter and me by the hand, ſhe fell a dancing with us, though the tears ſtreamed from her eyelids. I will dance too, ſaid Agathe, mamma! ſing that country-dance Alain uſed to play on his flute, my favourite tune! Her mother ſung it; Agathe was ſoon in an alarming condition; ſhe fell a howling; ſhe threw herſelf on the ground; ſhe called on death. When this fit was over, ſhe became ſenſeleſs, and was put to bed. I left the houſe,

houſe, ſhocked at the diſmal ſcene; walked at random, weeping, ſighing, ſick, bewildered, almoſt mad. What need had I of ſuch a ſight? Are not my own woes ſufficient? ſaid I. Perhaps the ſame fate attends me! How happy! It is reflection that kills us; reaſon pours venom into our burning wounds. Yes, I would think no more, reaſon no more, live like the beaſts; and time might heal the diſorders of paſſion. Indeed, my friend, I frequently wiſh my underſtanding to be loſt in the confuſion of its ideas, that no trace in memory might remain of my original condition. To love without hope; to be ever haunted with the diſmal image of a forlorn futurity; to be baniſhed by the object of one's affection, yet ſtill continue her ſlave! While I am fleeing from her, to feel my heart riven by the ſeparation! What a puniſhment! Shall I not envy the lot

of Agathe! Ah! my friend, in such an alternative, can it be a misfortune to lose one's reason!

LET-

LETTER XXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

I HEAR that my father is dying; I am going to close his eyes. That good father! I have cruelly neglected him! My foolish heart had almost forgotten that he existed; and now I am going to lose him! Engrossed by my unfortunate passion, nature was alienated from my bosom.

Adieu! Sir, I fly to Lyons; but cannot go without first seeing Miss de St. Cyran. Forgive me, if I break your laws; have compassion on my distress! Heavens! I must go; at what a crisis! I must leave my life behind me! When to view this

ſpot again? May not every thing have aſſumed a new face at my return?

LET-

LETTER XXXIV.

TERESA TO CONSTANTIA.

DEAR Conſtantia, what am I to think of a late event? It ſtill appears to me like a dream. Yeſterday I was with my mother; and ſhe mentioned Faldoni in terms of applauſe. At that inſtant he made his entrance. On the point of going a voyage to Leghorn (called thither by the danger of loſing his father) he came to take leave of us. He bowed at the word leave, with a viſible emotion; and I, in the conſternation of fear, let fall my work. I was ſeized at firſt with a trembling, and ſunk from thence into a ſtupor. Madam de St. Cyran expreſſed her wiſhes to ſee him again, and gave him a ſtrong invitation to return to Lyons, ſhould the

reſtoration

reſtoration of his father's health permit the journey. She added, that he might depend on a hearty welcome at all times in a houſe where he had won the eſteem and friendſhip of every body. But, continued ſhe, ſeeing him raiſe his handkerchief to his eyes, why this exceſſive ſenſibility? You are not bidding us farewell for ever; your ſtay at Leghorn may be ſhortened, Heaven may work miracles for your father; you will return hither, Mr. Faldoni, you will find us the ſame, exactly in the friendly diſpoſition you leave us. You will return, do you hear? I pray you do. And ſhe laid an emphaſis on the laſt words of her ſpeech. He aroſe much affected; and leaning on her hand, which he preſſed to his lips, Ah! Madam, you are too generous! Pardon my weakneſs! Pardon me if I make you a confidant of my affliction! But I have had my troubles,

bles, and you ſee them increaſe; on the brink of loſing my father——— Here he was ſtopped by his tears.— You talk of your troubles ſaid the beſt of women to him; would it be diſagreeable to recall their object to your mind? May it not be in my power to alleviate them? Conſider me as your friend! I liſtened with the moſt eager attention; every moment I trembled leſt the fatal ſecret ſhould eſcape from her; my eyes were fixed on her lips. Have the goodneſs to hear me, continued he; your kindneſs emboldens me to aſk you a favour; and I ſolicit it on my knees. He fell at my mother's feet, who immediately raiſed him from the floor. This action made me ſhudder; what could he be going to ſay? In an agony of apprehenſion I aroſe, and would have left the room, but he prevented me.— No, Miſs, he cried, you too muſt hear me; you are going to be married.—

Well,

Well, ſaid Madam de St. Cyran, what intereſt do you take in the ſettlement of my daughter? — What intereſt! Madam, my life, my happineſs is at ſtake.—If it be true, the favour I have to beg of you is everlaſting baniſhment from your preſence. Alas! you know not the exceſs of my raſhneſs! I have dared to raiſe my eyes to an object above me; I have had the audacity to breathe my vows in the ears of your daughter; I, whom fortune has placed at ſuch an immenſe diſtance below her. What would you have me ſay? It is granted that I was diſtracted, and continue ſo ſtill. To be ſure my delirium was pitied; and my pardon moſt condeſcendingly granted. After ſuch a declaration I deſerved to be puniſhed with eternal exile, but it was my fortune to addreſs an angel; and her goodneſs beheld in me a patient who needed indulgence. I blundered egregiouſly,

giouſly, miſtaking that for a favourable return of my paſſion, which was only the balm of humanity. Continually in danger of betraying myſelf by the wildneſs of my affection, that divine guardian obliged me to withdraw. I will not undertake to deſcribe my ſufferings in ſolitude, not daring to approach the doors that were ſhut againſt me, and hourly wiſhing to die. At laſt, with the ſerpent of deſpair preying on my heart, I forſook my forlorn aſylum, and was going to pay the laſt duties to my father.—Venerable old man! who took more than parental care of my childhood! How has Heaven avenged thee of my ingratitude! I was going to ſeek occaſion for freſh tears, when on my arrival here, I heard the news of this fatal marriage. Ah, Madam! Ah, Miſs! Not a thunderbolt could have more alarmed me; I ſtood motionleſs at the news, as if ſtruck with the arrow

row of death. As I recovered from my lethargy, I ran home like a raving madman; and in my firſt diſorder (Heaven forgive me) reſolved to free myſelf from the ſhackles of life. But Hope, whoſe chearing beams glance on the moſt wretched, made me doubt the truth of the report, and determine to be ſatisfied of it from your own lips. I conjure you, therefore, by all that is ſacred, announce my deſtiny! I know not, ſaid Madam de St. Cyran, whether I ought to anſwer you in your preſent condition. You ſeem beſide yourſelf; and without examining whether a mother may prudently ſatisfy your demand, I deſire firſt to ſee you compoſed.—Well! Madam, I am calm, but I ſhall not be ſo, when the clock gives the ſignal for my departure. Speak, I beſeech you. I will, ſaid the kindeſt of mothers, but do not interrupt me. You are young, Mr.

Faldoni, with a heart ſuſceptible of deep impreſſions. But luckily you have an excellent underſtanding, and by taking pains with yourſelf, may retrieve your errors. Some mothers would have received you with leſs indulgence. You are ſenſible, Sir, that honour forbids ſuch an attack on virtue as the making private addreſſes to a young lady. This is opening the road to ſeduction; and it is no more allowable to kindle a clandeſtine paſſion in the ſimple heart of inexperience, than to ſet fire to the houſe of an unſuſpecting neighbour. What would you have the mother of this child, then, ſay to you, Sir, who have owned a conduct which I cannot approve? Do I not ought, as you have deſired, to ſhut my doors againſt you? But violent remedies are not to my liking; and your frankneſs deſerves indulgence. To confeſs more, I am no ſtranger to your ſentiments, and

you

you have found the only way to disarm my resentment, by this declaration of them. Yet, how shall I forgive your behaviour! Have you not done us an injury? Suppose that two young people who have a mutual inclination for each other may be reciprocally seduced by love; you must allow that a man whose principles should be strengthened by experience, is more blameable than a girl of eighteen years. I do not say this in vindication of Miss; for I refer to another time the lesson I have to give her. Besides, to reduce you to a dilemma, if you thought this passion unwarrantable by the laws of society, why did you admit it to your bosom? And if you thought it lawful, why keep it a mystery from me? Answer this; and when I am satisfied, it will be my turn to inform you of my daughter's destiny. Ah! Madam, exclaimed the rash man, how strong is

reason,

reaſon, when the heart is unconcern-ed! But what a painful ſituation is mine! To love without the leaſt hope of conciliating eſteem! To ſee every thing in oppoſition to my inclination, yet have no power to reſiſt it! What ſtruggles have I not endured, before I could reſolve to ſpeak! Heaven alone was witneſs to my tears. I champed my bit; I plunged into the deſert like a roaring lion; ſleep, mirth, tranquillity were no more. Weary of the conflict, I ſunk under it. Is man invincible; or has not his power limits like his courage? Unable to go down with my ſecret to the grave, I have depoſited it in the heart of this innocence, as I would confide an offering to the altar; and I atteſt the Almighty, who hears me, that I alone am guilty. Do not con-demn the moſt virtuous of daughters, who has ſacrificed every conſideration to her duty. I don't think ſo, ſaid

my

my good mother, my daughter ought to have informed me of the first syllable that escaped your lips.

Here, Constantia, the guilty creature, trembling, hardly able to move, drew near her mother, fell at her knees, with supplicating hands, and a face bathed in tears — Pardon, pardon, Madam! For the sake of Heaven, pity my weakness; I am more criminal than you have heard; yes, I am, continued I, kissing her feet; you know not half my faults; I must be my own accuser. At that moment I seemed to be raised above myself; I felt a supernatural inspiration. — Behold, said I, drawing papers from my bosom, behold my crime! These are letters that I have received; let my answers be likewise shewn to you! Madam de St. Cyran arose with an air of conscious dignity, and leaving me prostrate where I lay, she advanced

vanced toward Faldoni, who retreated with all the emotions of fear. What have I heard, Sir? You have dared to write to my daughter! To write secretly to her! You, in whom I placed confidence, thus to abuse it! Did I listen only to the dictates of my resentment, my daughter should to-morrow be confined in a cloister; and you should never more appear in my presence. How can you apologize for your temerity?—I apologize for it, Madam! he exclaimed with warmth, did I not charge myself with being mad, and at war with every virtuous principle? But for this angel, whose purity saved me, who knows how far I might have proceeded! Do not believe, Madam, her self-accusation. Here are the only letters which my importunities could force from her; condescend to read them, and do justice to innocence! For my own, they carry with them

their excuſe, the language of inſanity, for which you muſt pity me. No, Sir, replied my generous mother, gravely, nothing can excuſe your conduct; and as to the ſtyle, that is of no conſequence. By your way of reaſoning every criminal action might be riſked, and the perpetrator have only to plead his inſanity! Heavens! what would become of ſociety were this logic generally admitted! Beſides, if a young man, a ſtranger, unconnected with the ſociety in which he lives, ſeeks by ſiniſter means to ſurpriſe the heart of an indiſcreet girl, where is the wonder? But that this girl, brought up with ſentiments of honour, and whoſe blood is derived from the unſullied fountain of virtuous anceſtry, ſhould be ſo loſt as to anſwer theſe clandeſtine letters, is what I cannot bear; and the laſt thing I expected to find exemplified in my own daughter! You, Sir, have

favoured

favoured me with this discovery; at how dear a price! You have taught me to estimate the merit of those adventurous young men, who, being well received in a family, fancy themselves entitled to disturb its tranquillity, and mark their visits with the baneful traces of the flames that they leave behind them. — I crawled on my knees to the tribunal of my judge. O, Madam, for Heaven's sake let me be immured in a cloister, it is the only favour I can implore. I can never again look up to my mother; never more support her reproaching eye; banishment is my only resource! And I bowed my forehead to the floor, sobbing plentifully. Arise, said my kind mother, embracing me; learn from this lesson to mistrust yourself; and I hope, Sir, you will in future pay a more respectful attention to the laws of decorum! On these terms I permit you to see us again. You

must have poſſeſſed real merit to have gained the heart of my daughter; you have good friends; I have heard you mentioned with the warmth of eſteem; and people, whom I honour, expreſs a regard for you; endeavour to deſerve their good opinion by imitating their example. It is true that the marriage of my daughter has been talked of, but not brought to a concluſion; perhaps on the preſent footing it never may. In that caſe, offer yourſelf nobly, and like a man, whoſe hand need not to be diſdained by any one. Declare yourſelf with becoming aſſurance and freedom, and you may perhaps be ſucceſsful. For I am not confined to the ſole conſideration of fortune and family in the choice of a huſband for my daughter, ſo as at all events, where they are wanting, to give a denial. Perhaps the man whom I would have baniſhed, may be the only one calcu-

lated to render her happy, and I would not give her occaſion to reproach me with having deprived her of the leaſt virtuous pleaſure in life. Ah! my dear mother! was all I could ſay, and fell again on my knees before that heavenly woman, whom I encircled with my arms. I wept, trembled, attempted to ſpeak, put my hand to my boſom as it were to releaſe a priſoner, for really my heart was in a pitiable ſtate of palpitation. Faldoni likewiſe threw himſelf at her feet. She raiſed him directly; talked of his voyage; deſired him to let his friends hear from him every opportunity; and preſſed him to return and ſee us. He, with a profound bow, haſtened his departure, taking leave of us with tears.

We ſet out to-morrow for the country, whither my father is gone before; our packets are made up; every

every thing taken away, and hardly paper left for me to write. Adieu! adieu! my dear Conſtantia, I ſeem to be going to the world's end. Alas! what ſignifies whither I go? I am ſure of not ſeeing him there.

I have loſt Lolotte, who is to be placed in a convent. Mr. —— the Curate has juſt got a living; his great age obliges him to decline the ſervice of his curacy, and he has promiſed my mother to follow her to Ormes.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.